



JAMES HARTNESS GRIFFES

Collected Poems

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

A TEXT-TECH PAPERS PROJECT

Extremes and Moderations

Early Southern California Poetry

Extremes and Moderations is a Text-Tech Papers project devoted to recovering poetry written, published, and circulated in Los Angeles and Southern California. Each volume brings neglected books and poems back into view through carefully prepared texts, archival images, biographical context, and a clear record of the surviving sources.

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

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Collected Poems

James Hartness Griffes

A Critical Reading Edition

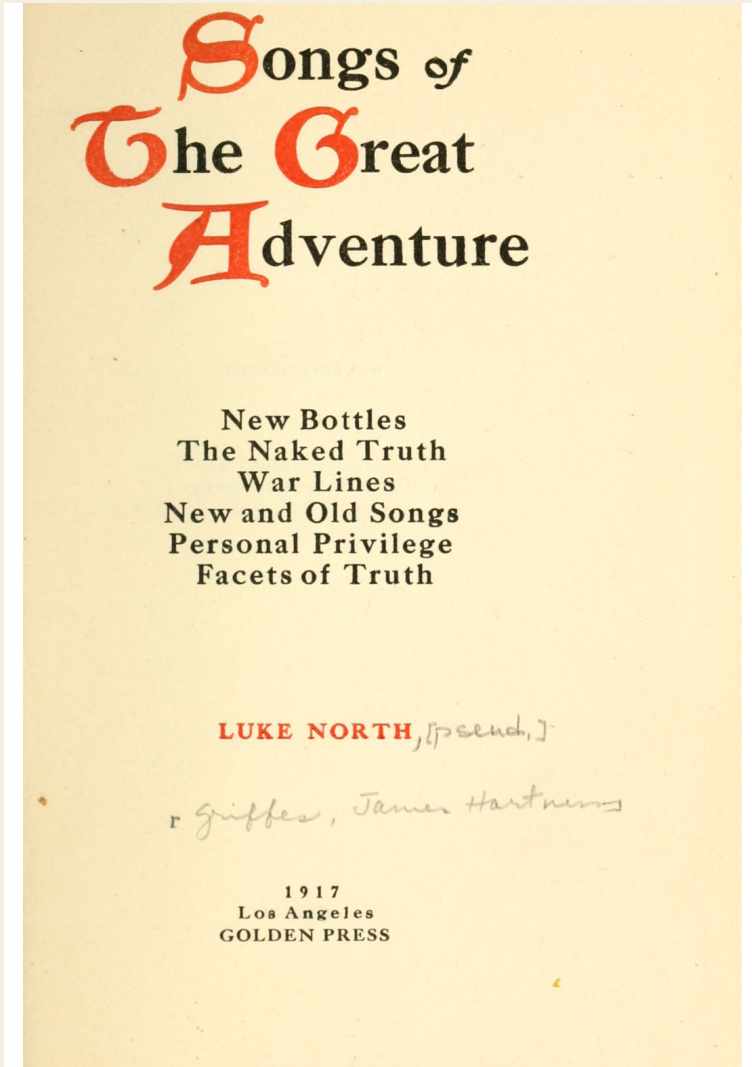
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Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry

Archival Images

A short selection from the source record



Title page of Songs of the Great Adventure (1917), published under the name Luke North.

Luke North

JAMES H. GRIFFES (Luke North) spent his early life in Schenectady, N. Y. He was a newspaper reporter in Chicago when that city had a flourishing Single Tax club of over one thousand members. Here his health broke down, and tuberculosis, which disease was the ultimate cause of his death, developed. He went to Arizona and started a newspaper.

His next appearance was in San Francisco where he became editor of a Sunday newspaper. In that city his wife was killed by a moral pervert, and Luke North, always a consistent opponent of capital punishment, appeared in court and passionately urged a commutation of sentence for the convicted.

He was in Los Angeles when the Macnamara trial was in progress, and worked for Clarence Darrow in unearthing testimony and in creating favorable public sentiment for the accused. His first publication in that city was *The Golden Elk*, an organization paper of the Elks of that city. His most informal of fraternal orders probably attracted North by reason of its singularly loose organization and its teachings of brotherhood. This publication was short-lived. Luke North then published *Everyman*, which began as a journal of philosophic anarchism and later developed into an organ of the Great Adventure, with which nearly all readers of the REVIEW are familiar.

The dead leader was a student of the occult. His eager intellectuality strove to pierce the curtain shrouding the seen from the unseen. A freethinker he, nevertheless, or perhaps in consequence, possessed much natural religion and a fine passion for humanity, which the vision of a free North roused to an intensity which swept all before it.

He had an intellectual honesty which permitted him to savour a mistaken conviction. His noble recantation of previously expressed views on the war was actuated by no motive of caution, for he had courage of a high order. "Radicalism, too, has its conventions," he said in a fine, unimpassioned phrase in the article analyzing the mental change through which he had passed.

He grew bigger intellectually as he grew older. He was, we believe, between forty-five and fifty, and had not yet arrived at the summit of all of which he was capable. Many of his earlier views he had discarded. He grew to embrace the larger philosophy of life and learned more of Henry George in the fierce stress of the two political campaigns in which he was the recognized leader.

Death brings an end to all of life's asperities. The serious antagonisms which are based upon unreasoning rejections, upon differences of individuality, and which develop into fierce hostility utterly incomprehensible to one who surveys these manifestations from a distance, are swept into forgetfulness when death shows their utter tility and triviality.

This is true in the presence of Luke North, dead, about whom there raged a storm from his first appearance as a

The opening of the posthumous profile "Luke North," Single Tax Review, March-April 1919.

Memorial Meeting to Luke North in Philadelphia.

A WELL attended memorial meeting was held at the Liberal League on Girard Ave. near 9th St., Philadelphia, Sunday, March 2nd, 1919, to honor the late Luke North, leader of the Great Adventure movement for the Single Tax in California. Eloquent and appropriate addresses were made by William Ross, Harry Hetzel and Leo W. Marks. Additional appreciative remarks were made by Messrs. Guerrara, Mulholland and Goldsmith. The chief points noted by the various speakers in commenting upon the departed leader's great service in the cause, were his individual devotion, his inspirational power, and his unconquerable hopefulness. His magnificent confidence in the innate goodness of mankind, his reliance upon their responsiveness to appeals to the noblest ideals, and his modesty as to his own contribution to the cause were adverted to. Sincere tributes to his unquestioned importance in the great crusade which resulted in the unprecedented vote for the Single Tax in California were made by the speakers. The potency of his inspirational writings, the marvellous pen touch with its irresistible swaying force, its capacity for keen analysis, deft; alert, incisive, flashing now with wit

alluring, and captivating with its varying charm and then with merciless swiftness and certainty of stroke "as though with scimiter of Saladin armed" was error and treachery put to flight. His was a poetic soul. He wrote and sung as he wrote. His genius was evangelistic. He caught the overlooked, and rapt one's attention, until the commonplace sordidness of daily life became a hideous thing. He quickened the vision of men to perception of the tragedies, as thus:

"There are starving children across the street! There are broken, weary, anxious, homeless, mortgaged people beneath the windows of every snug home and millionaire's palace in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles in a Land of Plenty! "Where the unused land and natural opportunities for a billion people are *held away* from sixty millions in want! "Everywhere millions and millions of idle acres—millions of people huddled in slums! What a smug lie it is to say they would rather stay there than go to work on the land, than build a home on a lot! What a transparent lie while thousands of land sharks make fat livings by selling and foreclosing installments on lots and acres!"

"School children cultivate speculators' idle lots!"

How this great injustice harrowed his soul! Do you marvel that Luke fought? His fine chivalry found here the great offence. So putting aside the things, that, in happier times, he would have loved to do, he threw himself into the fray for the children's sake. Of course he did not last long. He burned too intensely. And though he knew this, he never faltered. He willingly, aye, joyfully paid the price. How joyously he sang even while the call to go was sounding.

Report of the Philadelphia memorial meeting for Luke North, Single Tax Review, March–April

1919.

Editorial Note

This is a reset reading edition, not a facsimile. The two numbered rubaiyat sequences were collated page by page against their first editions; *Songs of the Great Adventure* was reset from the complete source scan. Running heads, folios, scanning debris, and physical word breaks were removed. Original spelling—including Griffes’s forms “filosofer,” “filosofy,” “fysical,” “thru,” and “tho”—was retained. Stanza breaks, numbered quatrains, internal headings, capitalization, and meaningful indentation were preserved. Four words partly lost at damaged page edges are restored in teal brackets. The prose essay “Between the Lines” is not included as a poem.

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Introduction

James Hartness Griffes wrote his first two poetry books as linked arguments for joy, freedom of mind, and the divinity he believed could be found in human beings rather than in an outside God. Under the name Luke North, he later turned the same convictions outward: against land monopoly, war, capital punishment, poverty, and every institution that placed property above life. He was also a newspaperman, playwright, printer, editor of *Everyman*, associate of Clarence Darrow, and the most visible voice of California's Great Adventure land-tax campaigns. This edition resets all 116 quatrains of *Rubaiyat of Cheerfulness*, all 206 quatrains of *Rubaiyat of Life*, and the complete poetry text of *Songs of the Great Adventure*. It restores "Title" and "Personal Privilege," which an earlier OCR-based edition had accidentally absorbed into neighboring poems.

Biography

James Hartness Griffes was born in Schenectady, New York, in 1863. The posthumous profile published by the *Single Tax Review* says that he spent his early life there before becoming a newspaper reporter in Chicago, at a time when the city's Single Tax Club had more than a thousand members. His health failed and tuberculosis developed; he then went to Arizona and started a newspaper.

Griffes married Katherine "Kate" Dooley in Milwaukee on September 4, 1887. They had a daughter, Frances, and moved west after a short Chicago residence. Kate was murdered in a San Francisco saloon on June 28, 1893. Contemporary accounts and the 1919 profile agree on the extraordinary action Griffes took afterward: though devastated by the killing, he opposed capital punishment and appeared in court to ask that the convicted murderer's death sentence be commuted. His later correspondence with Benjamin R. Tucker survives in the New York Public Library alongside letters involving his later wife, Diana Griffes.

In San Francisco Griffes edited a Sunday newspaper. By the first decade of the twentieth century he was in Southern California, writing, printing, and publishing. *Rubaiyat of Cheerfulness* appeared from the Golden Press in Los Angeles in 1907; its 116 numbered quatrains deliberately answer the melancholy associated with the rubaiyat tradition. *Rubaiyat of Life* followed in 1909 from

La Cañada. Its 206 quatrains are more expansive and metaphysical, arguing for reincarnation, human divinity, free thought, and a philosophy led by the heart. The present edition ends that book with quatrain 206 and does not treat its prose essay “Between the Lines” as poetry.

Griffes also wrote for the theater. His surviving plays include *Every Man Has His Price* and *The White Flame*. In Los Angeles he first edited *The Golden Elk*, an Elks organization paper. That publication evolved into *Everyman*, which began as a journal of philosophical anarchism and later became the organ of the Great Adventure. A 1913 ownership statement names James H. Griffes as editor, managing editor, and business manager, explicitly identifying Luke North as his pseudonym and the Golden Press as publisher.

During the Los Angeles labor crisis surrounding the McNamara brothers, Griffes worked for Clarence Darrow, gathering testimony and helping create public support for the defense. His connection to Darrow was practical as well as editorial: the Golden Press issued Darrow’s 1912 plea in his own defense, and *Everyman* printed Darrow and other radical writers. Griffes’s politics were not fixed. The 1919 memorial profile praised his willingness to disavow earlier convictions and noted that he revised his antiwar position during the First World War, while still distrusting patriotic spectacle and state violence.

The Great Adventure grew from Griffes’s effort to return unused land to use and replace conventional taxation with a tax on land values. Emma Goldman’s *The Blast* called Luke North the movement’s father in 1916. The California initiative that year received about 31 percent of the statewide vote, an unusually strong showing for a single-tax proposal. Griffes refused a compromise strategy the following year and helped qualify a more comprehensive land-value-tax amendment for the 1918 ballot. Written with Lona Ingham Robinson, Proposition 19 received 118,088 votes, or 24.7 percent.

Songs of the Great Adventure appeared in 1917 as both a poetry book and a campaign instrument. An advertisement in *Everyman* announced more than one hundred titles and stressed that every sale supported the campaign for a Free Earth. Griffes toured at least twenty cities to speak and read from the book. Its mixture of verse, chant, prose poem, political argument, and aphorism was intentional: the poems address unemployment, prostitution, child labor, racial division, war, the gallows, the press, railroads, personal conscience, and the “line of cleavage” between those who care and those who

do not.

Tuberculosis eventually reached its final stage, and Griffes died in early 1919. He received a quiet funeral at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Glendale, near Los Angeles; the only service was the reading of passages from *Songs of the Great Adventure*. A Philadelphia memorial meeting on March 2 remembered his devotion, wit, hopefulness, and capacity to make political injustice felt as an immediate human fact. His supporters continued to place related land-tax proposals before California voters in 1920 and 1922.

Griffes's archive is dispersed. The California State Library's California Ephemera Collection preserves material under his name; the Benjamin R. Tucker Collection at the New York Public Library holds three 1919 letters concerning him and Diana Griffes; scattered runs of *Everyman* preserve his journalism and campaign work. Read together, those records show that James Hartness Griffes and Luke North were not separate careers but two registers of one life: inward philosophical experiment and outward agitation for a freer earth.

Rubaiyat of Cheerfulness

1907

The complete 116-quatrain sequence, reset from the first edition.

Rubaiyat of Cheerfulness

1

Why should the Way of Things be dark and sad?
Why choose the Stygian paths and Gloom for God—
 While Nature's ev'ry mood reveals that man
Alone hath lost the art of being glad?

2

I cannot think that man is but the sport
Of elements that wantonly distort
 His fitful efforts to be great and wise—
Or God in human misery finds sport!

3

It is not true that throes of human pain
Make mirthful holidays for gods that reign
 O'er elements that now disport with man,
As man plays fast and loose with Law, for gain.

4

Filosofies are wove of human skill,
And in the weaving each his own sweet will
 May please. No static right hath any ism
The Joy of Life by subtleties to kill.

5

It is the fruitage of an addled brain,
That view of life which brings the tears and pain,
 Which seeing but the shape of things, mistakes
The Wine Cup for the Cheer it doth contain.

6

Come, weave your web of life when cup is full,
While hope runs high and heart is merciful
 Toward all that live: nor wait satiety's
Brown taste and night's dark shadows fanciful.

7

Let Heart Light delve into the mystery deep,
And Reason wait on Love, her faith to keep:
Her place to segregate delusion from
The truth: not hers behind the veil to peep.

8

The God I worship needs no priest profound
His laws for mortal welfare to expound,
But writes them large on all his handiwork—
'T is human subtleties that men confound.

9

Come read your Book of Life in Nature's laws,
And seek her meaning of whatever clause
Seems made for grief and leads to unbelief
That God is Love and Love the primal Cause.

10

Eternal mystery!—that question "Why?"—
The human heart in Joy may yet descry:
 The lover's ecstasy, the artist's mood,
At very portals of the ALL may lie!

11

If God is true and Nature's ways are right,
No bar there is on range of human sight,
 No bar save that which human indolence
Hath forg'd. 'T is creed and fear shut out the Light.

12

And tho the ultimate I cannot know,
If I can see the Law by which men grow,
 By which the tares to wheat and tears to peace
Are turn'd; if I can see the steps and know

13

That harmony is ever Nature's way,
That sorrow's veil but hides a brighter day;

If I can reason out the heart's desire
And correlate the thorns that line the way;

14

If I can glimpse the Gen'ral Plan, and see
How Love and Justice can omniscient be;
How Mercy lurks in ev'ry sin and pain
And wisdom comes thru grief and agony;

15

If I can see the Law's fruition HERE!
(My trust is scant on doubtful, distant sphere)
Why then for me the way of life is not
So drear; the path of Cheerfulness is clear.

16

'T is Western sun that blinds the Inner Sight
And shades the poetry of life with night
Of Science and sensation's narrow view.
Look to the East, O men of hope, for Light!

17

Take from the East its light on Nature's Way.
Throw out its weeds of creed and sad array
Of Oriental myth and fantasy.
But light comes from the East, I say.

18

Thus East and West agree: The Whole unfolds;
Brahma breathes out; the universe unrolls
Its scroll of evolutionary law,
And Mind begets whatever Life beholds.

19

But Western law is cruel, blind, and cold,
Its man a wanton toy, a plastic mold
Of clay shap'd by some ruthless Potter's hand
That shook—forbidding Soul Its life unfold.

20

In Eastern Law the God of Love I find,
Compassionate to sin of humankind;
 And pointing how and where adjustment comes
And never fails! ALL-SEEING Law—not blind!

21

In cyclic law of growth and change of form,
To which mankind, the stars, and tides conform,
 The reason of the Way of Things you'll find—
How Nature doth her miracles perform.

22

Give time and depth and scope to human life,
Nor dwarf its Days to three-score years of strife
 On this grim battle-field with anger, hate
And passion's blinding mists, alas, so rife!

23

Why all its agonies, its pains, and tears,
Its seeds of effort and its with'ring years
 On lessons but half learn'd and work but half
Perform'd—if death translates to other spheres?

24

All nature writes the answer bold and clear—
The theatre of human life is HERE!
 Death's but a Sleep between the Days of Life:
Man reaps where he hath sown—the harvest's here!

25

Where ripens wheat that 's sown on fallow soil?
Do demon gods conspire to cheat men's toil—
 To move the harvest field o'er Night—bring wrack
And ruin to all the human sweat and toil?

26

Where bursts the acorn thru its horny pod,
On distant Mars, or in the forest sod

Of planet where it fell? How reason ye,
That man allegiance bears to foreign God?

27

The Rose thou mournest when its petals fall
Ensouls the bud that bursts at Nature's call:
And in the glory of the new the Sap
And Essence of the old our eyes enthrall!

28

'T is but the form that dies and not the Soul:
The Essence of the Rose pervades the Whole.
The Jar is broken, but the Wine flows on!
Let not the heart's best love rest on the Bowl.

29

And all this loveliness shall reappear:
The selfsame Roses of the yesteryear,
With vesture new and perfume fresh from Sleep
And Rest—not on some other sphere, but here!

30

For man on earth is not a Transient Guest!
Nor brief, nor easy to attain, his quest
Of that lost Grail of Human Brotherhood,
Which once regained brings man the Alkahest.

31

Nor all your longings for another sphere
Shall set aside the Law that chains you here,
Till men shall make of earth a paradise,
And win the right to win another sphere.

32

On Golden Strands of Human Brotherhood
Shall man mount upward to a higher good—
To other worlds and shapes unknown. Till then
Man's place is here; his task the Common Good.

33

'T is but the outer sheath of man that dies—
As lovers' vows expire and summer flies.

What hell-born instinct prompts the selfish wish
The permanence of form to realize?

34

Or finds in Nature's gentle law of change
Inherent gloom? How then the world arrange—
Or build the flower of gold, or glass, or stone?
For basalt blocks the human flesh exchange?

35

Stones perish not, nor call for shallow tear
Dropt in the wine cup or the foaming beer.
Save tears for real woes, and bless the Law
That brings the Permanent new garb each year.

36

Unchanging form would make of earth a hell
And beauty's fairest shapes would yearn to sell
Their hopes of Paradise for change of garb—
If buttercups were cast of hardened shell.

37

O, ye of little faith—yet faith too much!
Who lean on man-made creed as on a crutch,
And fail to see in Nature's ev'ry way,
Of Love and Justice the Supernal touch!

38

O, ye of little faith—yet faith too great!
Who would the law of life and death translate;
Yet fail to read "between the lines," nor let
The Inner Glow the scroll illuminate!

39

O, ye who would set bar on human sight!
And circumscribe man's range of Cosmic Light

Within the narrow arc of sev'nty years,
And with the grave his strife and hope requite!

40

O, ye who fix your hearts on form and flesh,
Or with false lights of wealth the soul enmesh;
And lacking view of things beyond the range
Of sense, lack Fount that floweth ever fresh!

41

And ye who say that Sense alone can know,
And wisdom only from the Outer grow!
What turgid Wine flows in your Cup of Life
To hide the sparkle of the Flood below?

42

To you, in thoughtful hour, the world must seem
A hideous nightmare, a hellish dream,
Pierc'd here and there by rays of flitting light
That but confuse the whole infernal scheme.

43

If wrongs triumph, if love and hope go down;
If God's hand shook in shaping this poor clown;
If he's created prince, and I a plod—
Then God's a cheat: let wine the trouble drown!

44

The world, 't is true, seems cruel and unjust,
For often Virtue dies and prospers Lust!
And Faith alone, for me, will not suffice:
I cannot take so big a scheme on trust.

45

I must, I shall demand the reason why,
When woes fall heaviest on you and I,
And all the world seems framed for our torment!
Prate not to me of Faith and Trust on High.

46

What then, is there but creedal faith for man,
Or gloom of cruel Chance in Nature's plan?
 But reason's cold and pessimistic doubt,
Or Christian version of the heathen Pan?

47

Is there no bright and sane and cheering Way?
No universal Key by which men may
 Find Harmony in human destiny?
No sign of Plan Divine in Nature's Way?

48

Behold a glory at the door of life
Awaits to banish doubt, and gloom, and strife!
 Dame Reason's found in Cheerfulness a spouse,
And Commonsense has taken Joy to wife.

49

The head and heart of man again shall wed;
The Intellect by human Love be led,
 To banish in the joy of Nature's way,
The creedal night and gloom by science fed.

50

And from this marriage of the head and heart,
A fairer Hope is born—and lo! the art
 Of being Glad and True hath firmer base
Than faith alone or science doth impart.

51

The Heart Light glows upon the Soul of Things,
And hidden laws to mortal ken it brings,
 Revealing 'neath the garb of flesh and form,
Of Nature's Causal Force the secret springs.

52

There 's not a law on earth of God for man,
But mortal eye and human heart may scan,

If but the outer shell of life be pierc'd
And Love with Reason bare the Inner Plan.

53

Thus ev'ry hidden fact and circumstance
That woe of man or happiness enhance,
 Expression finds in outward mold of form—
The Seen and Unseen cast in consonance!

54

And as the small but replicas the great,
So gross and psychic planes associate
 And blend: from one the other can be known
Thus many a Riddle shall man translate.

55

When heart and mind shall soar beyond the sense,
And Reason wait on Soul's omnipotence
 To reach the bottom of the well of Truth,
And pour on life its flood's beneficence.

56

Now darkness broods and all is Unity,
And Form is lost in Night's identity.
 A Breath, a Word, a ripple on the Wave
Of Time—and Light brings forth Duality!

57

From cosmic Night and Light comes Trinity—
Religion's everlasting mystery:
 That two from One & all from None come forth:
Primordial law of Solidarity!

58

A trailing star into the seeming void
Is dropt—the ovum of an asteroid.
 A “wanderer” conceived, a world begot!
In cosmic wilderness of Form devoid.

59

Thus groups of worlds from out the starry light,
And souls of men in glory all bedight,
 Come trooping down from out the Milky Way—
Come to their Days of Life, from Cosmic Night.

60

From Time's dark cavern of tranquility,
All down the path of Life's activity,
 Come worlds and men to conquer space and fate
And reach the heart of true Fraternity!

61

Caught on the Wheel of life's necessity—
A Ray of God (of All Humanity)—
 I'll murmur not that I, a spark of It,
Shall fail to read divine Totality.

62

Yet this I know, but for myself alone
(Let each of Truth's array proclaim his own),
 That man of earth is Lord and God supreme!
Here He creates, and reaps as He hath sown.

63

I scan the earth, the sea, and starry space,
And nowhere find Volition's faintest trace.
 All palpitate by fixt and certain Law:
Uncertainty's in but the Human race.

64

The will to Do and Be in man I find:
Unfailing sign of the Creative Mind!
 Here consciousness has reacht the Godlike stage,
And Nature bows but to the human kind.

65

And in the Scheme of Things this mystery
Profound I see: that man's high destiny

It is to consciously produce on earth
The tie of Human Solidarity.

66

For that which Is must come to vision's plane;
The Heart of Truth be sponsored by the brain.

By choice shall man again enact on earth
The Cosmic Harmonies that ever reign.

67

I cannot see the Cause its trail deflect,
Nor trace each thought and act to its effect.

But Nature's stanch and true, I know, and Law
Unfailing each detail doth perfect.

68

There is no "iron hand of fate" on me,
No bond but human solidarity!

And tho I pay my share for man's false steps,
I pay no more than I alone decree.

69

Fruition is the name of human Fate:
No super-being doth Predestinate.

Each sows the seed that time for him shall reap;
Each instant doth each soul its life create!

70

Who look behind the veil of life shall see
That man himself carves out his destiny;

That fate is but the reaping of the sown,
And man alone e'er writes his own decree.

71

LAW limits but to rule of Harmony—
That ev'ry Cause its full Effect shall see.

And in the reaping each his pleasure takes—
The Cup he drains in gloom, or Cheerfully.

72

If then the fleeting hour of Now and Here
Eternal record of each hope and fear
 And thought and act mark on the warp of Time,
Futurity is mine! I'll drop no tear.

73

LAW binds all things to Rationality:
No other limit on man's will I see—
That 2 plus 2 are 4 and never more.
Why wail at this Inflexibility?

74

"The Moving Finger writes; and having writ,
 Moves on:" but why should man of Godlike wit
And all Futurity at his command,
Seek to evade or lose a word of it?

75

And this I seem to see, that man and men
Achieve by using Law! All power then,
 Is theirs who wisely use, nor waste in vain
The Cosmic force that lies in human ken.

76

Each thought and act, tho "good" or "ill" they be,
Sure guiding stars for all eternity!
 O, ye who sail life's sea sans chart or map,
Turn to the scroll: thy compass it will be.

77

If Fate is but the fruitage of the sown,
And ev'ry hope and deed bring forth their own,
 Why then it rests with me, not to undo
The Past, but carve the New—with me alone!

78

Who mourns the past or would the scroll unwrit,
Hath yet to learn that human growth is knit

On woof and warp of all experience.
All colors, too, must enter into it.

79

If woven in the fabric of a life,
No move is false, nor failure loss; nor strife,
Nor grief, nor sin, can mar the perfect plan
And pattern of a striving human life.

80

Like beads upon a Thread men's lives are cast,
Each Day of Life a bead. The first and last
Are strung the same, and all the beads on all
The Threads will look alike at last when mass'd.

81

Some wear a golden bead this Day of Life,
And some the ruddy hues of war and strife,
Whilst many dull and somber beads give tone
Of doubt and grief in modern life so rife.

82

Thus he the Beggar now and I the Sheik:
TOMORROW he the Sultan, whilst I seek
The mystery of life in devious paths
And learn upon the Thread my heart to keep.

83

The bead I wear I'll furbish for myself,
Nor seek to garnish it with stolen pelf.
The bead I wear transparent I will make,
And let the Thread shine thru—reveal my Self.

84

O, beads and beads of lives and lives untold!
What wisdom for us all your orbits hold,
When human hearts and minds are fixt upon
The Thread, and read the secrets that ye hold!

85

Ah, many chipt and broken beads I see!
Distorted lives, by man's uncharity;
 Cheap tawdry beads and beads of muddy glass,
Strung on the Thread of Life by man's decree.

86

Blind laws and customs of the rule of greed,
Still wrecking human life and planting seed
 That only thankless toil and weariness
Can grow for millions doomed by man to need!

87

Blind laws that heap on some what none create,
And give the few what Nature doth donate—
 The earth and treasures of the mines, nor man
His industry nor genius can create.

88

Blind laws by man himself alone decreed:
Stale customs that on slavery still feed,
 Defying Cosmic Law and spoiling life
To foster selfishness and private greed!

89

Blind laws that parcel to the "lucky" few
Those values that from common toil accrue!
 Dire laws of greed and graft that take from All
And lavish where no work or worth make due!

90

Laws reeking with the lust of wolfish pack,
That ev'ry attribute of Justice lack,
 That nourish vice and craft and weigh upon
The weak like senescence on Sinbad's back.

91

Blind and withering laws that soon must go,
As man his cruel childhood doth outgrow:

Cain's code of greed to Get and Have and Hold
That which the strongest must 'erlong let go!

92

And hearts of men bow'd low with years of gain,
With only gold for all their moil and pain,
 Go to their Longer Sleep with halting step—
I will not say their Day of Life was vain.

93

And hearts of men are sore of strife for gain.
It matters not tho all their toil be vain;
 The years grow wearisome for all who fix
Their hearts upon the shining golden grain.

94

But life expands with Giving, and years crown
Usefulness with peace; e'en funeral gown
 Hath pockets that will carry golden deeds
From life to life: for Worth age wears no frown.

95

When on the altar of the Common Good
Men lay their hope of Gain from laws withstood
 For private ends and mercenary greeds,
Then dawns the reign of Social Brotherhood.

96

When All have equal Opportunity
To work and reap: there is no charity
 So great! When men shall hold their mother Earth
Intact, in trust for all humanity!

97

Full long Dame Reason's scorned the Human Heart
And man has lived on maxim's of the mart.
 The Key that will unlock all Doors for him
Lies in the marriage of the Head and Heart.

98

Not all the Grape that flows from gold to red
A light on human destiny e'er shed.
'T is Wine of Life mixt with the Heart's best blood,
By which the wandering feet of men are led.

99

And tho the "Grape with logic absolute"
Confute the creed and ism, man's attribute
Of sympathy and hunger for the Heights,
Unfed remain for all the wine of fruit.

100

For Man is not the Jar that drinks red wine,
Nor flesh that presses lips incarnadine.
Give Youth its mede of effervescing flood,
But Men crave stronger Drink than fruit of vine.

101

'T is true that never "blows the Rose so red"
As where Truth's pioneers have lived and bled.
On Calvary is human progress fixt,
And crown of thorns press on the toiler's head.

102

MEN do not mourn that Thorns with Roses grow,
Nor for the chance of prick or scratch forgo
The fragrance and the beauty of its bloom.
No blossom as the Rose doth lure men so.

103

MEN bless the Rose for growing on the Thorn,
And hope to see its lovely flow'r adorn
Each Thorn that grows on human life's highway,
Each troubled hour by Roses overborne.

104

"But Roses come and go!" Ah, that's the lie
Which robs life of its Joy—that Roses die

And leave the heart forlorn. 'T is only Form
That comes and goes—the Rose to vivify!

105

Crush not the Rose in heedlessness or lust:
Bruis'd Roses wither soon, and turn to dust.
It is the Rose within the Rose that brings
Perfume to life—O, pluck it, if you must!

106

But having pluckt your Rose—or cast the Tang
Into your Cup of Life, curse not the Fang,
Nor whimper as you drain the Karmic Brew:
Its Bitterness is lost in Pæan sang.

107

Half the gloom of life lies in the Quaffing;
CUP was never brew'd with all Pang lacking.
Groans ease no pain and frowns resolve no doubt:
Stand, and drink your Cup with eyes a-laughing.

108

So many Roses on the Way of Life!
And yet so few! and yet the world so rife
With war and gain and greed that Roses die
Unseen and crusht beneath the human strife.

109

The Rose that buds and blows in open air—
So willingly it grows, so free and fair!
Its fragrance and its beauty blessing all
Who take and leave it!—growing everywhere!

110

Roses pluckt and crusht with lust of owning—
Lust of hoarding, hiding, and providing
Charnel houses for the dust of empty
Shells! mad lust that immolates the living.

III

They say that This or That man cannot know,
That only vintage of the fruits that grow
 In soil can wisdom bring—because on Form
Alone man's lookt, two thousand years or so.

II2

With telescope in vain man has peer'd out,
Nor microscope has helpt resolve his doubt.
 He turns at last to look within Himself,
And there finds wisdom not extant without.

II3

Thus looking In this FACT he shall perceive,
That creeds and systems all confuse, deceive;
 That Truth is like a Diamond in the sky,
And from its rays each Soul its hope MUST weave.

II4

Man can delay, but not avoid this Must:
In vain, in vain, he lean and trust:
 Each Soul finds joy and peace within himself,
For Time is long and Law All things adjust.

II5

One ray I catch from flashing Stone of Fate—
That Hand-in-Hand shall men storm Heaven's Gate;
 That none shall in the nether world be cast,
And none shall early be, and none Too Late.

116

That each and all shall share whatever pass,
As toward the Pearly Gates they move en masse;
 That every Soul a Conscious God shall be,
And that, at last, you'll find—no “Empty Glass”!

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Rubaiyat of Life

1909

The complete 206-quatrain sequence, reset from the first edition.

Rubaiyat of Life

1

Awake! Awake! Love's Shaft of Fiery Gold
Burns thru the clouds of superstition old.
The Living God stands forth! the Dawn is here!
The heart's pure flame creates the Day foretold.

2

Dispelling heresies of centuries old,
And creedal doubt and logic's dogma cold;
Man's love of man the world encircling fast—
Love claiming Life—deferred desire bold!

3

Love claiming Life and warming intellect,
The heart of man his wanderings to direct.
Love claiming Life, demanding sway on earth,
Revealing Man of Fate the architect.

4

Age long by sense alone life's Way was led;
The human mind on faith or reason fed;
The God within lay hidden 'neath the flesh;
And man for Deity e'er searcht the dead!

5

No Living God the eye of man could see—
No faith in life beyond Fortuity:
No hope or joy not ending in despair
Or crusht by codes of dead Authority.

6

The living God stands forth in human birth!
In fearlessness no power his Will can girth
To hasten evolution's toiling way,
Release the millions, paradise the earth!

7

Why view the universe as dark and sad,
Its ways unjust, its circumstances mad;
While Nature's every mood reveals that man
Alone hath lost the art of being glad?

8

I cannot think that man is but the sport
Of elements that mockingly distort
His fitful efforts to be great and wise,
Or God exists the human Will to thwart.

9

It is not true that throes of human pain
Make mirthful holidays for gods that reign—
Or Chance, or Law, or Deity disport
As man plays fast and loose with Life, for gain.

10

Man's lord of all his eye or Will doth reach.
The skies bend low and listen for his speech;
The tides, the trees, the lower kingdoms all
Await his touch; his to command and teach.

11

And tho man sit in idleness supine,
And rest and lean, and cringe to Outer Shrine,
His task of ruling is not thus escapt:
The forces uncontrolled himself confine.

12

Filosofies are wove of human skill.
And in the weaving each his own sweet will
May please. No static right hath any ism
The Joy of Life by subtleties to kill.

13

It Is the fruitage of a stunted brain,
That view of life which brings the tears and pain.

Which seeing but the shape of things, mistakes
The Wine Cup for the Cheer it doth contain.

14

While yet your Cup is full plan out life's ways.
While hope runs high and merciful your days
Toward all that live; nor wait satiety's
Recoil and midnight's shadowy dismays.

15

Youth's Wine, life's Bread, & Oil of growing thought
Untrammelled by the creeds of dead men taught;
Let these, and Love, thy destiny safeguard.
What's writ is emptiness, the code is naught.

16

For life is first, and then filosofy.
Blood, love, and hate carve mortal destiny—
Till these, transmuted by the riper growth.
Bow to the Will of Man's divinity.

17

Let Heart Light delve into the mystery deep,
And Reason wait on Love, her faith to keep:
Her place to segregate delusion from
The truth: not hers behind the veil to peep.

18

The God I worship needs no priest profound
His laws for mortal welfare to expound.
But writes them large on all his handiwork—
'T is creed and code that riddles dark grow 'round.

19

The God I worship, then, In Man I find.
Nor law nor circumstance his Will doth bind.
Creator of his world within and out—
All nature but the product of his Mind.

20

Come, read your Book of Life in Nature's laws,
And seek her meaning of whatever clause
 Seems made for pain and leads to unbelief
That Love, embracing All, is Primal Cause.

21

If Love is true and Nature's ways are right.
No bar there is on range of human sight,
 No bar save that which fear and indolence
Hath forged. 'T is creed & awe shut out the Light.

22

And tho the Ultimate I ne'er foreknow,
If I can see the Way by which men grow,
 By which the tares to wheat and tears to peace
Are turned; if I can see the steps that show

23

True harmony in Nature's perfect sway,
How sorrow's veil hides but a brighter day;
 If I can reason out the heart's desire
And correlate the thorns that line the way;

24

If I can glimpse the General Plan, and see
How Love and Justice can omniscient be;
 How Mercy lurks in every error sown,
And wisdom comes thru grief and agony;

25

If I can see the course of Justice Here!
(My trust is scant of any distant sphere)
 Why then for me life's bitterness is gone;
I'll thread it's mazes, sans despair and fear.

26

'T is Fear that cozens Hope of its caress
And leaves your piety all comfortless;

'T is Fear, I say, that robs your days of Joy,
And tinges human life with bitterness.

27

'T is Fear, 't is fear of flesh, of death, of "lust"—
In Nature, God, or SELF, no helpful trust!
All modern life is ruled by dead men's codes—
Its hope is based on shining bits of dust.

28

O, man! stand up, and dare be What thou art!
Dare to enjoy—dare to forget life's mart
Dare to be free—dare even that thine Heart
May lead! O, be the very God thou art!

29

Dare lift thy head from Custom's cruel yoke;
Tear from Society its tradesman's cloak.
Dare take the soil, thy heritage of birth—
Dare all, dare all!—Thyself alone invoke!

30

'T is creed and ignorance cloud life with fear—
And Love that brings the ripper, richer cheer.
It is not true that happiness and peace
Are purchast only by the Bitter Tear.

31

And wisdom's growth is not alone thru pain;
From Joy than Grief there comes the better gain.
Life's royal robe of Magnanimity
In Love is wove from out the Karmic Skein.

32

Yet words and words the Door shall never ope;
With thought unspoken doth the Spirit cope:
Life's meaning by the Heart alone is reacht,
And Inner Light makes sure the outer hope.

33

'T is Western sun that blinds the Inner Sight
And shades the poetry of life with night
 Of science and sensation's narrow view.
Look to the East, O men of hope, for Light!

34

Take from the East its light on Nature's Way.
Throw out its weeds of creed and sad array
 Of Oriental myth and fantasy.
But light comes from the East, the East, I say.

35

Thus East and West agree: The Whole unfolds;
Brahma breathes out; the universe unrolls
 Its scroll of evolutionary law—
And Mind begets whatever Life beholds.

36

In Cosmic void the Breath, the Word, the Sound!
The Pattern manifolds, the countless round
 Of universal day and night begins—
The cyclic web of daily life 's unwound.

37

But Western law is cruel, blind, and cold,
Its man a wanton toy, a plastic mold
 Of clay shapt by some ruthless Potter's hand
That shook—forbidding Soul its life unfold.

38

In Eastern lore the God of Love I find.
Compassionate to sin of humankind;
 And pointing bow and where adjustment comes
Its Justice Argus-eyed, and never blind!

39

In rhythmic tides the life waves rise and fall.
Mankind, the stars, the seas, concurring all.

The impulse from within, the pull without—
Life, Growth, and Change obey the mystic call.

40

Eternally God's breath indraws again:
The summer suns return with golden grain:
The earth gives back whatever man puts forth,
An it be love, or hate, or pleasure's pain.

41

That ever hidden Inner Urge impinging
The "void" without, and Form forever hinging
Between the flow and flux of pulsing life:
The "I" and "Thou" Totality infringing!

42

Eternal mystery!—that question "Why?"—
The human heart in Joy may yet descry:
The lover's ecstasy, the artist's mood.
At very portals of the ALL may lie!

43

Give time and depth and scope to human life,
Nor dwarf its Days to three-score years of strife
On this grim battle-field with anger, hate
And passion's blinding mists, alas, how rife!

44

Why all its agonies, its pains, and tears,
Its seeds of effort and its withering years
On lessons but half learned and work but half
Performed—if death translates to other spheres?

45

All nature writes the answer bold and clear—
The theatre of human life is Here!
Death's but a sleep between the Days of Life:
Man reaps where he hath sown—the harvest's here!

46

Where ripens wheat that 's sown on fallow soil?
Do demon gods conspire to cheat man's toil—
 Remove the harvest field o'er night, reduce
To emptiness his years of sweat and moil?

47

Where bursts the acorn thru its horny pod,
On distant Mars, or in the forest sod
 Of planet where it fell? How reason ye,
That man allegiance bears to foreign God?

48

The Rose thou mournest when its petals fall
Ensouls the bud that bursts at nature's call:
 And in the glory of the new the Sap
And Essence of the old doth still enthrall!

49

'T is but the form that dies and not the Soul:
The Essence of the Rose pervades the Whole.
 The Jar is broken, but the Wine flows on!
Let not the heart's best love cling to the Bowl.

50

And all this loveliness shall reappear:
The selfsame Roses of the yesteryear.
 With vesture new and perfume fresh from Sleep,
Shall wake, not in some other world, but here!

51

For man on earth is not a Transient Guest!
Nor brief, nor easy to attain, his quest
 Of that lost Grail of Human Brotherhood,
Which once regained brings man the Alkahest.

52

Nor all your longings from the Now to veer
Shall break the Human Tie that chains you here,

Till man shall make of earth a paradise,
And win the right to win another sphere.

53

On Golden strands of Human Brotherhood
Man's path ascends to where the angels stood—
 To other worlds and shapes unknown. Till then
His place is here, his task the Common Good.

54

And then, this outer sheath of man that dies.
As sweethearts' vows expire and summer flies—
 What hell-born instinct prompts the selfish wish
Its permanence of form to realize?

55

Or finds in Nature's gentle rule of Change
Inherent gloom? How then her ways estrange—
 Or build the flower of gold, or glass, or stone?
In basalt blocks the human form arrange?

56

Stones perish not, nor call for shallow tear
Dropt in the foaming mead or vintage clear.
 Keep tears for real woes, and bless the wave
That brings the Permanent new garb each year.

57

Unchanging form would make of earth a hell,
And beauty's fairest shapes would yearn to sell
 Their hopes of Paradise for change of garb—
If buttercups were cast of hardened shell.

58

O, ye of little faith—yet faith too much!
Who lean on man-made creed as on a crutch,
 And fail to see in Nature's every way,
Of Love and Justice the supernal touch.

59

O, ye of little faith—yet faith too great!
Who would the law of life and death translate;
 Yet fail to read “between the lines,” nor let
The Inner Glow the scroll illuminate!

60

O, ye who would set bar on human sight!
And circumscribe man’s range of Cosmic Light
 Within the narrow arc of seventy years,
And with the grave his strife and hope requite!

61

O, ye who rest your lives on form and flesh,
Or with false lights of wealth the soul enmesh;
 And lacking view of things beyond the range
Of sense, lack Fount that floweth ever fresh!

62

And ye who say that Sense alone can know.
And wisdom only from the Outer grow!
 What turgid Wine flows in your Cup of Life
To hide the sparkle of the Flood below?

63

To you, in thoughtful hour, the world must seem
A feverish nightmare, a hellish dream.
 Pierced here and there by rays of flitting light
That but confuse the whole infernal scheme.

64

If wrong must win. If love and hope go down;
If God’s hand shook in shaping this poor clown;
 If he ’s created prince, and I a clod—
Then God’s a cheat; let wine the trouble drown!

65

The world, ’t is true, seems cruel and unjust,
For often Virtue dies and prospers Lust!

And Faith alone, for me, will not suffice;
I cannot take so big a scheme on trust.

66

I must, I shall demand the reason Why,
When woes fall heaviest; when You and I
Seem tost as by an angry, wanton Fate—
Prate not to me of Hope and Trust on High!

67

What then, is there but creedal faith for man,
Or all-foredooming Chance in Nature's plan?
But Reason's cold and pessimistic doubt,
Or Christian version of the heathen Pan?

68

Is there no bright and sane and cheering Way?
No universal Key by which men may
Find Harmony in human destiny?
No sign of Plan Divine in Nature's sway?

69

Ah, yes; there is an Open Door to Life,
A Way of Things not wed to gloom and strife
Let Reason find in Human Love a spouse.
And Piety take Common Sense to wife.

70

Behold, a glory at the Door of Life
Awaits to banish human woe and strife!
Awake, and bid the Joy of Life come in
And dwell where doubt and sadness now are rife.

71

The Head and Heart of man again must wed.
The Intellect by human Love be led,
To banish in the Joy of Nature's way
The Creedal night, and gloom by Science fed.

72

Full long Dame Reason 's scorned her nobler part.
And man has lived on maxims of the mart.

The Key that shall unlock all Doors for him
Lies in the marriage of the Head and Heart.

73

Nor Rhapsody, nor "Logic absolute,"
Man's Leaden errors into Gold transmute.

The subtleties of Church fore'er confuse,
And e'er the grindings of the Bank embrute.

74

Take from your Piety its husk of creed.
From Factory and Shop their dusty meed
Of wolfishness and calculating greed—
Give Reason, one; the others, Love most need.

75

The mart lacks Love; all creeds are Reasonless;
And poisonous the Cup men daily press
To lips drawn tight in fear of Poverty
Or prideful mockery of "Holiness!"

76

But from this union of the Head and Heart
A fairer Hope is born—and lo! the art
Of being Glad and True hath firmer base
Than faith alone or science doth impart.

77

For Heart Light glows upon the Soul of things,
And hidden laws to mortal ken it brings,
Revealing 'neath the garb of flesh and form,
Of Nature's causal force the Secret Springs.

78

Come, find with me, in Nature's vast unfolding,
That Which, from seat within, e'er does the molding;

Nor look afar for gods and devils scolding—
To miss in Self the strength of life upholding.

79

There 's not a fact of heaven or earth for man
But mortal ken and human heart may scan,
 If but the Outer Shell of life be pierced
And Love with Reason bare the Inner Plan.

80

Thus every hidden urge and circumstance
That woe of man or happiness enhance,
 Expression finds in outward mold of form—
The Seen and Unseen cast in consonance!

81

And as the small but replicas the great.
So “gross” and “psychic” planes associate
 And blend: from one the other can be known—
Thus many a riddle dark shall man translate.

82

Nor idly sit beside a flowing river
(Save on a day that clouds do threaten never);
 Nor lose thyself in meshes of the flesh,
Save but to gather strength for fresh endeavor.

83

Oh, fear them not, the “Jug of Wine” and “Thou!”
Let lip press lip—the flesh enseal the vow.
 But loiter not o’erlong—pass on, pass on!
The pleasures of the Jar are not enow!

84

When heart and mind shall soar beyond the Sense,
(And Reason wait on Soul’s omnipotence
 To reach the bottom of the well of Truth)—
Why then we’ll learn a little of the “Whence.”

85

Now darkness broods and all is Unity,
And Form is lost in Night's identity.
 A Breath, a Word, a ripple on the Wave
Of Time—and Light brings forth Duality!

86

In cosmic Night dawns Light—then Trinity—
Religion's "everlasting mystery"—?
 No mystery, but common rule of three—
Primordial way of Solidarity!

87

The Whole unfolds at dawn of Cosmic Day,
And Numbers fall, in orderly array,
 (Diversity in Unity e'er lurks)
The rigid rule of Sequence to obey.

88

Why, yes, the world is full of problems dark,
When to sensation's voice alone we hark.
 'T is only That Within can read the Plan—
O, from the Tree of Life tear off the bark!

89

A trailing star into the seeming Void
Is dropt—the ovum of an asteroid:
 A "Wanderer" conceived, a world begot—
In cosmic wilderness a Form deployed!

90

Thus groups of worlds from out the starry light,
And souls of men in glory all bedight.
 Come trooping down from out the Milky Way—
Come to their Days of Life, from Cosmic Night.

91

From Time's dark cavern of tranquility,
All down the path of Life's activity,

Come Worlds and Men to conquer space & fate
And reach the heart of true Fraternity!

92

Caught on the Wheel of life's necessity—
A Ray of God (of All Humanity)—
I'll murmur not that I, a Spark of It,
Shall fail to read divine Totality.

93

Yet this I know—but for myself alone
(Let each of Truth's array proclaim his own)—
That Man of earth is Lord and God Supreme!
Here He creates—and reaps as He hath sown.

94

In groups of Conscious Entities came man
From other sphere—a Mighty Caravan!—
To tarry for a Cosmic Day on Earth,
Nor fold his tent till he works out his Plan.

95

As Living Gods the Life Wave came to earth,
Man's evolutionary Day to girth.
The story of the Christ is history
Not of one man, but of the Human Birth.

96

In symbol cosmic truth was ever told.
All scriptures variously the Plan enfold.
'T is time at last to tear aside the veils—
Yet words but symbols are, however bold.

97

Man came, and “fell”—took on the fleshly shape:
Creator he, not offspring, of the ape.
That Man could from the monkey grow—alas!
What fancies then may flow from too much grape!

98

And all that 's now on earth or e'er shall be—
The Simian brute, the fish, the stone, the tree—
 Inside or out, unseen or seen—by Man
Were clothed—progenitor of Form is he!

99

Vex not thy life with asking why the Whole
Unfolds: the answer's known but to the Soul,
 Whose comprehension reaches back of words.
For reason of the Wine, ask not the Bowl.

100

From Night of Time came I to earth, and You,
Because Day follows Night—and then we knew:
 Again we'll know why all this "hollow show"—
Ere Day gives way to Night the Whole we'll view.

101

And yet, the answer 's not so far to see
(When all the world is bright and fair to me),
 The Perfect God is here on earth; is here.
In You and Me—because he wills to be!

102

I scan the earth, the sea, and starry space—
Of Discord here or there no faintest trace—
 All palpitate in waves of harmony:
Uncertainty 's in but the Human race.

103

The will to Err in man alone I find:
Unfailing sign of The Creative Mind!
 Here consciousness has reacht the Godlike stage,
And Nature all bows to the Human kind.

104

In freedom perfect, absolute, and vast
The universe, its worlds, man's life, are cast;

And Cosmic “Law” ’s but harmony supreme
Unbroken by the human arts that blast.

105

And in the Scheme of Things this mystery
Profound I see: that man’s high destiny
 It is to consciously produce on earth
The tie of Human Solidarity.

106

For that which IS must come to vision’s plane;
The Heart of Truth be sponsored by the brain.
 By choice shall men again enact on earth
The Cosmic Harmonies that ever reign.

107

I cannot see the Cause its trail deflect,
Nor trace each thought and act to its effect.
 But Nature’s stanch and true, I know, and step
By step, each separate detail doth connect.

108

There is no “iron hand of fate” on me,
No bond but human solidarity!
 And tho I pay my share for man’s false steps,
I pay no more than I alone decree.

109

Fruition is the name of human Fate:
No super-being doth Predestinate.
 Each sows the seed that time for him shall reap;
Each instant doth each Ray its life create!

110

Who look behind the Veil of life shall see
That man himself carves out his destiny;
 That fate is but the reaping of the sown.
And each alone e’er writes his own decree.

III

“Law” limits but to rule of Harmony—
That every Cause its full Effect shall see.
And in the reaping each his pleasure takes—
The Cup he drains in gloom, or manfully.

II2

If then the fleeting hour of Now and Here
Eternal record of each hope and fear
And thought and act mark on the warp of Time,
Futurity is mine! I'll drop no tear.

II3

“Law” binds all things to Rationality:
No other limit on man's will I see—
That 3 plus 3 are 6 and never more.
Why wail at this Inflexibility

II4

“The Moving Finger writes; and having writ,
Moves on:” but why should man of Godlike wit
And all Futurity at his command,
Seek to evade or lose a word of it?

II5

And this I seem to see, that man and men
Achieve by using Law! All power then,
Is theirs in fearlessness who use, nor waste
The Cosmic force that lies in human ken.

II6

Tho “good” or “ill” each act of you or me—
Sure guiding stars for all eternity!
Oh, ye who sail life's sea sans chart or map,
Turn to the “scroll,” thy compass it will be.

II7

If Fate is but the fruitage of the sown,
And every thought and act bring forth their own.

Why then it rests with me, not to undo
The Past, but carve the New—with me alone!

118

Who 'd have the past recalled, the scroll unwrit,
Hath yet to learn that human growth is knit
 On woof and warp of all experience.
All colors, too, must enter into it.

119

If woven in the fabric of a life.
No move is false, nor failure loss; nor strife.
 Nor grief, nor "sin" can mar the perfect plan.
Oh, then, forget the Pain—take Joy to wife!

120

Have faith in Life; its skies are always clear
Above the blackest clouds however near.
 The Joy of Yesterday will knock again:
Ope wide the door; pour out a Cup of Cheer.

121

In cyclic waves come Gloom and Happiness,
Maugre the outer circumstance or stress.
 Gloom hungers e'er for sympathy, and Joy
Stays only where the welcome doth caress.

122

Like beads upon a Thread men's lives are cast,
Each Day of Life a bead. The first and last
 Are strung the same, and all the beads on all
The Threads will look alike in finis masst.

123

Some wear this Day of Life a golden bead,
And some the anxious hues of war and greed,
 Whilst many dull and somber ones give tone
Of gloom and doubt—to modern world its need.

124

Thus he the Beggar now and I the Sheik:
Tomorrow he the Sultan, whilst I seek
 The mystery of life in devious paths
And learn that wisdom comes but to the meek.

125

O, beads and beads of lives and lives untold!
What wisdom shall your orbits then unfold—
 When human hearts and minds are fixt upon
The Thread, and read the secrets that ye hold!

126

Ah, many chipt and broken beads I see!
Distorted lives, by man's uncharity;
 Cheap tawdry beads and beads of muddy glass,
Strung on the Thread of Life by mans decree.

127

Blind laws and customs of the rule of greed,
Still wrecking human life and planting seed
 That only thankless toil and weariness
Can grow for millions doomed by man to need!

128

Blind laws that parcel to the "lucky" few
Those values that from common toil accrue!
 Dire laws of greed and graft that take from All
And lavish where no work or worth make due!

129

Laws reeking with the lust of wolfish pack,
That every attribute of Justice lack.
 That nourish vice and craft and weigh on weak
Like Old Senility on Sinbad's back.

130

These old and withering laws now soon must blow,
As man his cruel childhood doth outgrow:

Cain's code of greed to Get and Have and Hold
That which the strongest must ere long let go!

131

And hearts of men bowed low with years of gain,
With only gold for all their toil and pain.

Go to their Longer Sleep with halting step—
Ah, well! no life is totally in vain.

132

And hearts of men are sore of strife for gain—
Or it be fruitful, or their toil in vain:

The years grow wearisome for all whose lives
Are spent in bondage to the Golden Fane.

133

But life expands with Giving, years do crown
With peace fair work and worth, and funeral gown

Hath pockets that will carry golden deeds
From life to life: for Growth age wears no frown.

134

The crude and banal strife of gold must go,
For hearts are weary of the empty show.

Now toiling millions plead to listening ears.
And soon the New the Old shall overthrow!

135

The Better Day and Way to earth shall bring
Surcease of Hunger's Fear: then men shall sing

At work, and all that lives the impetus
Of joyous growth shall feel—& thought take wing.

136

When on the altar of the Common Good
Men lay their hope of Gain from laws withstood

For private ends and mercenary greeds,
Then dawns the reign of Social Brotherhood.

137

When all have equal Opportunity
To work and reap: there is no charity
 So great! When men shall hold their mother earth
Intact, in trust for all humanity!

138

Not all the Grape that flows from gold to red
A light on human destiny can shed.
 'T is Wine of Life mixt with the Heart's best [blood,]
By which the wandering feet of men are led.

139

And tho the "Grape with logic absolute"
Confute the creed and ism, man's attribute
 Of sympathy, his hunger for the Heights,
Unquenched remain for all the wine of fruit.

140

For man is not the Jar that drinks red wine,
Nor flesh that presses lips incarnadine.
 Give Youth its mede of effervesing flood,
But Men crave stronger Drink than fruit of vine.

141

'T is true that never "blows the Rose so red"—
As where Truth's pioneers have lived and bled.
 On Calvary is human progress fixt.
And crown of thorns doth press the Toiler's head.

142

That Thorns on Roses grow men do not mourn,
Nor e'er forego the Fragrance for the Thorn.
 Let Roses bloom on every ill of life—
Each troubled hour by Roses be o'erborne.

143

"But Roses come and go!" Ah, that's the lie
That robs life of its joy—that Roses die

To leave the heart forlorn. 'T is only Form
That comes and goes—the Roses vivify!

144

Crush not the Rose in heedlessness or lust:
Bruised Roses wither soon, and turn to dust.
It is the Rose within the Rose that brings
Perfume to life—Oh, pluck it if you must!

145

But having pluckt your Rose, its brier flung
Into your Cup of Life—tho scarred and stung,
Don't whimper as you drain the Karmic Brew:
Its bitterness is lost in Pæan sung!

146

Full half the gloom of life lies in the Quaffing:
In every Cup there's Pang within the draffing.
Groans ease no pain and frowns resolve no doubt.
Then stand & drink your Cup with eyes a-laughing.

147

One came who pluckt His Rose of Life and tost
It to the World, nor murmured at the cost.
(Who give their all as Nature gives reap most.)
A fairer Rose He gained than that He lost!

148

And all who find the Inner Light, nor shrink
The stronger, headier Wine of Life to drink,
Lay Roses on the altar of the World—
With blood and love cement the human link!

149

So many Roses on the Way of Life—
And yet so few! and still the world so rife
Of war and greed that Roses bloom and die
Unseen and crusht beneath the human strife.

150

The Rose that buds and blows in Open Air—
So willingly it grows, so free and fair!

 Its fragrance and its beauty blessing all
Who take and leave it!—growing everywhere!

151

Of Beauty her Free Sceptre to dethrone,
How many Roses crusht to Hoard and Own!

 Mad lust to Have and Hide—and e'er provide
But charnel house for ash of Roses blown!

152

In Autumn days cling not to Springtime Rose—
The flower of Youth let go—a fairer grows.

 Red Roses for life's Summer years, and Gold
Of Ophir for the Winter hours that close.

153

Seek not for Roses in the Vale of Tears.
Its stunted blooms bespeak of Self man's fears.

 Life's Rose in Sunlight grows. Bend low the ear:
Its petals ting with Music of the Spheres!

154

Man sells his Roses as the harlot flings
Her favors to the human creeping things,

 And reaps her meed for every flower blasted—
Joy scorned disease and death forever brings.

155

Some sell their Roses to a demon thirst
Of gold—spend all their days in greed immerst.

 Some listen to the lure of passions wild,
And burn their Roses in desires accurst.

156

Some sell Life's Roses for a sounding name—
Some barter peace and love for empty fame.

Some sell and sell, all happiness in trade—
The rule of daily life—a fair world's shame!

157

And those who would not sell their Roses red.
Must ever part with them for daily bread.

The Game of modern life is Buy and Sell—
And Luxury on Human Blood is fed.

158

All Life's best Roses then are held too slightly;
And not the least those gript and hoarded tightly.

In fear and doubt of Nature, Life, and Love,
His Roses man lets go, alas, too lightly!

159

For lust of Having men thus blindly choose
The peace and joy of Living now to lose;

Unmindful of Life's Roses free that bloom
To Give, to Give their All and ne'er refuse.

160

A Rose shall in Life's Garden come to grow,
And men await its budding, hearts aglow—

A Rose devoid of Thorns, its blossoms fair
To sweeten life, and peace on earth bestow.

161

The slips are planted and the soil kept free.
Ten million hearts the royal bloom to see

Give all their best to human freedom's cause.
And O, the glory of the Day to be!

162

Indeed, on earth with "Fate" we shall conspire,
Recast the wolfish Scheme of Things entire.

Unshackle chains that hold men from the earth,
Remold the nations to the "Heart's Desire"!

163

No higher task or aim has man than this:
(Nor they a full life lead that are remiss)
 To Revolutionize the wanton codes
That doom the mass to Poverty's abyss.

164

'T were vain one climb the Garden's Upland Height,
A Thornless Rose to seize by Spirit's might.
 Who gathers fragrance for himself alone
His Rose shall find accurst by Inner Blight.

165

From Heart to Heart, tho never eyes may see,
Intact the human bond shall ever be;
 Nor may one loosen it, by toil or craft.
To step beyond the Great Fraternity.

166

For severed lives rejoin the Human Whole,
And those "releast" gain not the Final Goal:
 Resurgent to the end the Common Cause,
Till men shall know each other Soul to Soul.

167

Alike Within and Out man's course is run—
(From Center to the Rim shines e'er the Sun).
 Life's strength & poise at Inner Shrine is found—
In human service its best joy is won.

168

No mystic life that shuns the Outer Path
Shall conquer fate. Inaction's aftermath
 Holds bitter tears for those who seek the Way
For self. Beware the God within his wrath!

169

For every Flow of Wine a Jar must fill,
Nor wantonly the Golden Fluid spill,

Nor carelessly the Vessel mar or crack—
Lest thou befoul the brew thou wouldst distill.

170

The Sun is greater than its single Ray,
And sway of Whole each Unit doth obey—
Till One shall learn the essence of the All
To draw, and be himself Lord of his Day.

171

Tho bound to Whole, its energies to save,
No life to aught but ignorance is slave.
Fore'er the choice is free to reach and be
The All—to mount and ride the Cosmic Wave.

172

At Center of the Whole the power lies:
Let all the Center be who power prize
Not to rule others but themselves to free.
Take then the Most!—(yet not the Least despise).

173

None really mourn that two plus two make four,
But seize, and from it weave their need or more.
Not “law” but rule of Like to Like binds life:
The fact that but one Key can ope your Door.

174

Man to unlock each Door of Life is free.
Yet sot and God at once he may not be.
Sit still and rust who will, but cease to whine
Nor fancy that from heaven shall drop your Key.

175

Not every Key shall open every Door,
Nor one man's truth be all men's sacred lore.
As many Portals then as Souls there are.
Steal not my Key—a Leaner I abhor.

176

A Day shall come—bowed hearts, dim eyes, shall [see]
A time when men, thru yearning to be free,
 Shall learn to help and not to bind—shall learn
To live and love, be kind, and Disagree!

177

The Lethal Cup to man no wisdom brings.
We learn by living, loving, doing things.
 “School keeps” in Daylight Hours, and death is [but]
The Curtain ’tween Life’s Acts that Nature rings.

178

Death opes no Door not often oped before,
And That which Passes In knows well the “Shore”
 Where It shall rest (as in the sleep of night)
And free of discord spread its wings and soar.

179

Death ’s not grim-visaged, cruel, cold, austere—
But as a gentle, loving mother dear.
 She rocks her tired children to their Sleep
Betimes, and shelters them from Day grown sere.

180

Death is not dark—its shores all Stygian black—
(Save to the body’s eyes that ever lack
 Purview beyond the Form.) But Death is Light,
The Light of Time’s eternal zodiac.

181

And That which Enters In to rest and soar
Is not the Total Man, but less and more
 Than He whose evolutionary Days
Are cast on earth, its mysteries to explore.

182

Oh, fear not Death, nor mourn her kindly ways—
Nor fancy that just dying your debt pays.

Life's debt is paid—its passport only gained—
By growing, loving, living, all your days.

183

If Problems could be solved by dying merely,
And we could Grow, & see Life's Way more clearly.
And peace and joy so cheaply purchast be—
How foolish then to live and buy more dearly?

184

Beware, the Cup of Death its Bitter Dregs!
Or it be quaft too soon! Or one who begs
Its surcease as the easier way! Death may
Not serve as Crutch for those who have two legs!

185

As like to like doth flow, and every cause
Effect doth know—so Death not quickly draws
The troubled Soul to peace. Control—cast out!
But do not recklessly invoke Death's jaws!

186

Thus if the heart know only Outer life—
If “snaps the chord” in midst of battle rife—
The You that You are now earth hovers o'er,
And slowly Soul sinks from terrestrial strife.

187

Death feeds on Form alone, and this Man molds.
His every thought and act a Shape unfolds.
He laughs at Death then who expands & grows,
And fashions faster than the Reaper holds.

188

Time's havoc on the Garb of Flesh shall stay
And even Death the human Will obey,
When finding in Himself the power divine,
Man rules the forces that await his sway.

189

Would age defy, its canker never know—
Would taste the Wine of Time's eternal flow?
Not vain the search for Life's Elixir was—
To live fore'er is but to Love and Grow.

190

Life's Key is forged in Love's pure flame of Gold
Fierce fires whose dead white fury, seeming cold.
With roaring heat uniting lives and worlds.
Brim with one bubbling flux the Cosmic Mold.

191

Ah, yes; environment enslaves us all!
Because supine we rest, or rage and fall
On knee to Powers far, and hesitate
The Flame to light—the Man within to call.

192

Tho facts, events, and circumstances bind.
Inert are these, unconcious, senseless, blind.
To rule them is the part of human Will—
Of Him that dares his all the Heights to find.

193

O, be a gambler bold! and freely throw
The Dice of Life—lay all its “hollow show”
Of dross upon the cloth, its Gold to win—
And play the greatest Game the Heart can know!

194

They say that This or That man cannot know.
That only vintage of the fruits that grow
In soil can wisdom bring—because on Form
Alone man's lookt, two thousand years or so.

195

With telescope in vain man has peered out.
Nor microscope has helpt resolve his doubt.

He turns at last within Himself to search,
And there finds wisdom not extant without.

196

Truth flashes like a Diamond held a-high.
Each his hope weaves from Rays that catch his eye.
Truth Absolute, in words ne'er spoke, deep lies
At center, where the Rays, converging, die.

197

Cain's answer to his God was partly right,
His brother's keeper man is but by might:
His friend and sharer, yes; but no man finds
The Way by following another's Light.

198

His brother each can help but none may bind;
Who rules another is himself most blind.
As many paths to Fields Elysian lead
As there are conscious Gods in Human Kind.

199

To stand upright alone in joy or pain,
To stand, or fall still fighting, nor complain
To drink the deepest Cups that life may hold—
This each must learn, his strength of Self to gain.

200

For only those that Stand Alone can Serve.
Who Lean, or murmur at the Cup, unnerve
Whom they would help. Dread not the Tests of [life]
That tutor mind and heart no more to swerve.

201

The cost of happiness will e'er advance.
Yet every farthing paid doth but enchain
Life's joy. Be not content with copper coins—
The Purest Gold is your inheritance.

202

To many Idols cold men bend the knee—
Abstractions, Platitudes, “Prosperity!”
 But naught I see so sacred in the world
As Man—just Man, is God enuf for me.

203

The Yesterday, Tomorrow, and Today—
In one mold cast—inseparable are they.
 A cheat is Time, the three are one, all parts
Of Now’s sequential and eternal play.

204

The world is vast, its mysteries profound.
Seek not to circumscribe them in the round
 Of school or creed: all tune the mind to Gloom
And close the heart to Nature’s joyous sound!

205

One ray I catch from flashing stone of Fate—
That hand-in-hand shall men storm Heaven’s gate;
 That none shall in the outer void be left,
And none shall early be, and none Too Late.

206

That each with all shall share whate'er may pass,
As toward the Pearly Gates we move en masse;
 That every Soul a God in power shall be,
And that, at last, you'll find—no "Empty Glass."

Publication. First published in *Rubaiyat of Life*. La Cañada, California: Golden Press, 1909.

Songs of the Great Adventure

1917

The complete reset poetry text of the 1917 collection, including “Title” and “Personal Privilege,” both lost in the earlier OCR-derived edition.

Audacity

Indeed, on earth with Fate we shall conspire,
Recast the wolfish Scheme of Things entire.

Break feudal codes that hold men from the earth.
Remold the nations to the Heart's Desire.

'Tis Fear that cozens Hope of its caress
And leaves your piety all comfortless.

'Tis Fear, I say, that robs e'en Love of joy
And tinges human life with bitterness.

'Tis Fear, 'tis Fear of flesh, of death, of "lust"
In Nature, God, or Self, no helpful trust.

All modern life is ruled by dead men's codes—
Its Faith is based on shining bits of dust.

O Man! stand up, and dare be What thou art;
Dare live, enjoy, demand; forget the mart;

Dare to be free, dare even that thine Heart
Shall lead! O, be the very God thou art.

Dare lift thy head from custom's slavish yoke,
Tear from Society its tradesman's cloak.

Dare take the Soil, thy heritage of birth—
Dare all, dare all! Thyself alone invoke!

O, be a gambler bold and freely throw
The dice of life, lay all its hollow show

Of dross upon the cloth—its Gold to win—
And play the greatest game the heart can know!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 9.

Who Will Work for a Free Earth?

Who will work for a Free Earth—
To establish the rule that no one shall hold
 more land than he uses—
Who will—Work!—not merely talk and attend
lectures and banquets—Who will Work
 To end poverty quickly by establishing the
 rule and the law—
 That the Earth shall be open to all on
 equal terms?
Who will do his share Now—
Here in California, Oregon, Texas—wherever—
 At This Moment to apply the Golden Rule
 at the base of life—
To abolish basic laws and customs that pauperize the many by giving the land
 and its
 resources to monopolists and speculators—
Who will Work now to establish the rule of a
Free Earth?
Who will give all he can—
Of himself, his talents, his time, his thought,
 his cash, and his energy—
Whatever he has to give—give it freely,
 finely, generously.
 For no private gain higher or lower
 Than the satisfaction of doing his utmost to
 halt the starving of children, the prostitution of maids, the wage
 slaveries of men and
 women, the disemployment of millions—
Who will give and work Now?
Here is the Opportunity—
To take an actual, tangible, definite step in a
 legal and orderly manner
To achieve the First Necessity of an unenslaved
 Manhood—A Free and Open Earth!
 The rule of which once gained, the downward pressure toward greater
 and greater
human degradation—toward increasing
suicide, crime, prostitution, and disemployment—will be halted!

On a free and open earth—
Cooperation will be practicable,
 Real Individualism will be possible,
Fraternalism's profit can be shared by all,
The parent Privilege will be dead!
The root cause of War will be gone!
The institutions of Comradeship may then
 begin to grow.
 Dreams and longings of the enlightened human
 heart may then take shape.
 Man's innate sense of justice (sans quibble)—
The human passion to utter freely the Soul's
 fondest boldest deepest urges—
 Manhood's need to be fearless and expansive
—his everlasting search for the Intangible!
Womanhood's need for a wholesome earth on
 which to breed Courageous Men—and lure
 them to higher daring with the "starry
 treachery of her eyes!"—
All these—and all the lesser or greater things of
growth, happiness, peace, comfort, expression
and experience—
Whatever it is that all or any of us are after—
 All these must Begin!
 How can they otherwise begin save—
 On a Free and Open Earth?
And here we have made a start—
 Here in California and in Oregon and in
 Texas—
Here we have drawn a Human Bill
—a peoples' measure, to be enacted by the
 People—
 A bill that says in essence: "Use your land
 or get off it and let some one else use it—
 use the oil, coal, timber, ores of the earth or
 yield the titles by which you hold them
 idle!"
By the terms of this bill the People assert
 (grant and establish to themselves)—

To the Whole People on Equal Terms
The earth and its resources!—
Grant and Establish to Themselves at least
the legal power to control and share fairly
the land and its produce.

If there develop “other bridges to cross”
Before the earth can be opened to all men—
We shall be the better able to cross them
having crossed this one unitedly, compactly.

If other power than legal power
Shall be necessary to open the earth to man
We shall be thrice armed and doubly strong
For having taken the legal power Together!

Here now is the struggle for a Free Earth
Fairly begun!

What will You do to further it?

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p.
10.

Give Labor the Vision of a Free Earth

Comes a voice: "Labor is Life—Not Vision!"
Comes to rebuke the idealists, those "dreamy
men and women filled with ideas."
A voice
Echoing the masters' dictum
That whatever is must be;
And the church's dogma—
A few are chosen of God and many not.
It is not true. What is
"God and my country" but a vision?
What are all the shibboleths of the masters—
Law and Order, Progress, Posterity,
Patriotism, Majesty of the Law,
Preservation of the State—
Would you call them actualities?—
And a thousand other sounding phrases
By which the masses are chained—
What are these but visions?—
False ideals impressed upon Labor,
Dreams (nightmares) dogmas
By which Labor was led to captivity
And is held there?
Labor does not originate its own visions
But its capacity for them is inherent
Unending profound.
Labor is led imprisoned bound
And might be Freed
By visions!
Above all is Labor Vision—
Too much so for that it lacks wisdom
To sift the false from the true
And falls victim to the abstract ideals
Most insistently impressed upon it.
Only by Visions—
By ideals unattaint of narrow petty personal cash
or material considerations—
Shall Labor be led to its own unfoldment,

For only by visions
Is Labor deeply stirred
And blindly led.
As Labor is led to the shambles
So it can be led to the Light—
By Visions.

Give Labor the vision of a Free Earth
And a Splendid Manhood
Here!—in this world—
Now!—in this generation.
Give it the vision of an earth free
Of hate and its gallows—
An earth with no prisons or penal codes,
No judges and detectives,
No landlords and paupers—
Give Labor a vision
That will stir its soul to Action,
Awaken its heroism and daring
And Manhood!
Labor is not all blind
All content with its chains.
See, it turns toward the Light—
Yearns for other Visions!
And we meet Labor's soul hunger
With logic! with political economy!
With lectures and resolutions—
Of a thousand differing and contradicting kinds.
We greet Labor with our own
Lack of Vision
Or with hopeless theologic platitudes
A little changed in phrasing.
Labor staggers confused bewildered
At the multiplicity of counsel.
Our mechanized logic frightens it.
Whom shall it follow—
Which ist or ism of a dozen?
And where is the Vision—
The saner, better, purer Ideal
Than "God and my country"?

Labor is not Vision, say you?
Labor is all Vision—a prisoner to its visions.
It is we who think a little
That lack vision.
Think a little harder, friends—
Open the heart—
And back will come the vision—
The beautiful vision of a Free Earth
Without paupers, parasites, and prostitutes—
The vision we have lost
In wrangling over its distant details,
In debating how (not) to obtain it—
The vision of a decenter Home for Man
On Earth—on a free earth!—
Forgetful that only Labor can build it.
We have lost the Vision.
Open the Heart for its return.
Let it burn out
The dissonances of our differences
And knit us into a compact priesthood
To lead the human mass
To its own unfoldment.
With our regained Vision
Let us greet Labor.
With our Vision
We will arouse in Labor
Its deepest wildest strongest
Holiest and boldest Passion
Of Man for Man,
The passion of Life and daring
And High Adventure
That shall tread down
Tyrants and tyranny,
Exploiters and exploitation,
In a mad mighty rush of Man
Toward the Light—
In a sweep as impetuous
As a band of a thousand bisons
Obliterating everything in its path—
As irresistibly as the manhood of Europe

Swept across the nations and the seas
To rescue the Holy Sepulchre!

Labor has no vision?
It once had!
And can have again.

Labor has no vision!
Whose fault is that?
Ours.
We, the makers of visions—
The natural priesthood of the mass—
We have failed
To give Labor a Vision.

When in distrust
Of its theologic visions
It turns to us
We give it—economics!
Labor has had visions,
Has one now—
Hell's vision of death and hate and murder
In Europe.
And in America
It clings doubtfully to the old visions,
The masters' visions—
But its face is turned our way
And in its eyes is a cosmic hunger
A world longing—a mute
Searching passion for a New Vision
Ere it plunges
To another sea of blood.
No vision!
Let us give it a Vision—
An impracticable unattainable
Dream Vision!
In its rush to gain which
It may strike off many chains
And at the mid-goal
Find itself on a Free Earth
Potentially its own master.

Do we fear?
Do we doubt?
What is it that stays us?
Shall the mass be led only by evil visions?
Can't the mass be led by
Love as well as hate?
Can't it be easier led by
Love than by hate—
To its own unfolding
Than its own undoing?

The cosmic tide of human progression
The world wave of democratization
The trend of all the human centuries
Are ours to use.
They await intelligent employment.
They point the way
Of Least Resistance!
Kings priests exploiters
Have to battle against them.
They are on our side.
All the Powers of Light, seen and unseen,
 known and guessed.
Will aid us.
Love and intelligence—
The human head and heart—
All their highest mightiest values—
Those that have saved the race
From extinction
In its darkest hours—
All will be on our side!
Impracticable!
It is the only practicable
Move on the human horizon—
The only one that will achieve
Anything worth crossing the street to get.
It is the only move
That can win!
Greed's tyranny is
Increasing!

In America, as elsewhere,
Its victims grow more numerous
Every year.
Manhood is waning!
Your hope of further education
Is futile
On a monopolized earth!
Why do we haggle and hesitate—
We, the Intelligent Minority of America?
 If Labor has no Vision—
The fault is ours.
 Come, let us regain our Vision
 And show it to Labor—to the human mass—
 And start them on
 The Holiest Crusade
 The weary old world has ever known!—
 Man's Great Adventure—the quest
 For the human alkahest!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p.
13.

This Will Come

And Labor bold in all its might shall rise
Its own to grasp and hold—high heaven emprise!
 The earth to seize and make forever Free—
Thus strip from Greed its power to tyrannise!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 20.

Title

What mortal makes or adds an inch of land?
O'er earth let him alone stretch forth the hand
 Of lustful ownership and sun and air
And liberty and even life command!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 20.

Who Will Join the Great Adventure?

Who then will join a movement to release America's land to its inhabitants
upon Equal
Terms?—

Destroy Privilege at its Base

Halt the hunger, prostitution, child labor, and
“crime” so ridiculously Unnecessary in an
undeveloped land of immeasurable richness!—
Stop the Cosmic Hideous Joke of a million idle
men on a billion Unused Acres!!

Who will join a movement to release Man from
needless, deadening poverty and free him to
himself—to his better, truer, kinder, wholesome Self that hungers for
expression and
experience, and is deterred first and mainly
by the terrible economic pressure which
brings but misery and grief even to the
few who reap its harvest?

Who will join—Who will give themselves unreservedly—

Who will find their own keenest good—

Who will serve, and dare, with no hope of
reward or preferment, for no honors, titles,
emoluments, epaulettes, or iron crosses—the
greatest cause the world has ever known?

Who will join the Great Adventure!—to free, not
a class, not a race nor a color of men, but
all men!—

And make of America the world's Asylum
where every one may find a
Home without a Landlord and reap all
his labor sows?

Who will join with those who Care and Feel and
will Resolve to Free the Earth

Quickly! tomorrow, today, very soon!—in This
generation!—Now—

By the force of numbers!

By the power of Human Sympathy quickened

to life from its long sleep in the deeps of
Man?
For the manumission of All, regardless of
class, creed, doctrine, tenet, ism—
Heeding only the First Human Need, free
access to the Land!

Who will help the effort to establish a tenure
of use and occupance as sole title to earth,
air, and sky—
Thus to abolish Exploitation at its root—
By an Immediate appeal to the Heart of the
Human Crowd!
Careful to eschew ephemeral sentimentality, or
the lower emotions that lead to violence and
play into the hands of Greed—
Yet fearless of any contingency, deeming the
Human Need of paramount importance—

A concentrated, united appeal, by the Entire Intelligent Minority of America—
Of all the sociologic schools and doctrines—
Combined in a mighty effort to arouse the
whole human mass from its Apathy—
Centering upon the One Demand, a Free Earth
(intellectual differences of method to be considered afterward)—
Invoking as its leverage the only power of
human unanimity, the Heart Force latent in
every being—

Who will join The Great Adventure?

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p.
21.

On and After—

On and after
O, what shall the date be?
On and after which
No man shall rob another
By authority of the State.
On and after
Men! Let's make it soon!
On and after which
No man's daughter need sell
Her sex for bread.
On and after—
Are we nearly ready to be Men?
On and after which
None shall kill and debauch
By power of the State.
On and after
The world has waited long for
 the date
On and after which
Greed shall not fatten
On human sweat and blood.

On and after
Men will blush to recall the day
On and after which
Five million jobless wanderers
Found homes and work on the
 Land!
On and after
On and after which
No man shall hold of earth
More than he can use!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 23.

“I Am for Men”

He stood for Men
Not for parties, sections, classes;
Not for dogmas, doctrines, isms—
Nor all the minutiae of over-elaborated plans for
the future.
Nor for craven caution, dissimulation, equivocation—
Patience that now outrages virtue—
Program’d ways and means which if not followed
The world may stay in hell.
He stood for Men
For in his soul he knew the line of cleavage
Was not between the robber and the robbed—
Was not marked by external difference,
By rank or class or occupation or wealth or
poverty—
He knew that poor men could be very cruel and
rich men kind.
He knew the line of cleavage was in the heart—
those who care and those who don’t—
This Henry George who wrote “Progress and
Poverty.”
He stood for Men
And was he wrong to yield no tithe to classes?
What has now become of all the appeals
To class interest, class consciousness, class solidarity?
The human heart will not respond to them—in
every class are tyrants.
The human mass forgets its every interest,
Flings to the wind all self and class advantage
And goes out to die for a word.
He stood for Men
And showed the world how to unshackle the
chains that bind men.
He showed how poverty begins,
Where modern slavery has its roots,
And how to tear them up.
The earth is for all men, he said—

And his word has gone around the world—
And now it's time to act!
He stood for Men
Not creeds and doctrines, nor all the lesser details of future contingencies.
He bared the earth to man.
It is for us to take it.
He tried to gain it, and was beaten back to his
 death.
Now we will gain it—
At whatever cost!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p.
25.

A Million Jobless Men

A million jobless men—

On twenty-three hundred million acres of idle
earth
Rich with unworked mines,
Webbed with highways and railroads,
Watered with rivers and brooks
Under snow-capped peaks and mountain lakes.

A Million jobless men—

In an idle, unused, vacant, fertile land
Dotted here and there with villages and cities
In which a hundred million mouths want food
And a hundred million human needs
And longings go half supplied.

A million jobless men—

Idle, hungry, roofless, shabby men
With ten million women and children dependent upon them.
Wandering aimlessly over twenty-three hundred million acres
Of land that is mostly fertile and mostly idle—
Idle, vacant, unused land—and a starving
people!

A million jobless men—

In an idle, vacant, unused land broad enough
To house without crowding every human being in the world—
Rich enough to support
All the earth's population,
Its own few people but partly housed, fed and
clothed!

A million jobless men—

Clerks, bookkeepers, artisans, laborers, all the
professions—
Men with nothing to do, who can find no work,
While two million stunted children labor in
mine and mill
And needy women must sell their sex for food—
A million or maybe six million jobless men!

A million jobless men—

And ten million poorly paid men who get
barely enough to sustain their families.
And a million women on the streets, and a
million hungry children,
Plus a million mortgaged homes, and a million
business bankrupts—
On twenty-three hundred million acres of inexhaustible richness not a
thousandth part of
which has been touched!
A million jobless men—
And twenty million human dolts content to live
in hell—
To lecture, write, legislate, investigate, resolve,
and vote
To “cure unemployment!” with a learned President
And a cabinet and a congress of economic
students
Who institute Employment Bureaus!! to feed
the hungry, jobless, idle men tramping over
idle, vacant, undeveloped land!
A million jobless men—
And ten million legislators, judges, detectives,
soldiers, sheriffs, constables, and policemen
With clubs, guns, bayonets, legal process, penal
codes, prisons, handcuffs, dungeons, and
gallows
To keep” these million jobless men from going
on the idle, naked, fertile acres
And feeding themselves, their women, and
children!
A million jobless men—
In 1914
Now most all at work making death machinery
to blow each other to hell!
The land still idle—and a million wage slaves
making murder machinery!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p.
27.

A War Song for Men

Hear the rumbling legions
Now the hour of war!
Not to slay the foeman
Nor to bleed a state.
War for human beings,
Love instead of hate.
Hear the tramp of millions;
Nor bombs nor cannon roar
Only men awakened,
Aliens by birth—
Overwhelming legions
To seize and free the earth!
Rising are the millions:
Nor fear nor hope can bar.
Not for gods or dogmas
Not for words their fight.
Singleness of purpose—
Might befriends their right.
Race nor creed divide them,
Gathering near and far;
Puissant come the millions.
Captained by their need.
Thought and care are leading
Earth to wrench from Greed!

War's for gain forever;
Then let the gain be ours.
Keep the braid and tinsel,
All the minted gold;
Earth alone we're taking—
Birthright of the bold!
Scorn your death devices,
Greed's infernal powers;
Life itself we're seeking!
This our first command,
Pealing now as thunder—
Open ye the land!
Rise the famished millions

Driven off the land;
Spurning peace or plunder,
Seeking lust nor loot.
Thralls to sloth no longer
The millions sluff the brute.
Upright humans hungry,
Fearlessly they band.
Codes nor laws nor titles!
O, governments, beware—
Heed the need of millions—
Men who know and dare!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 30.

The White Man's Totem

Paper titles to idle acres
Are the crime and shame
Of Christendom—
Its prisons and brothels
Paupers and billionaires!

Paper titles to idle oil lands
Are gasoline at 20 cents
Plus the wage slaveries
Disemployment and slums
Of civilization.

Paper titles to idle acres
Are the white man's idol
His totem and fetish
His bloody sacrifice
Of women and children!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 32.

That the Land Be Opened to Man

That the land be opened to the people.

That every adult stand in actu or potentially on
his own piece of earth
From which only death can dislodge him.

That the whole people say to Greed:

“The parent privilege is dead: the primal monopoly has ceased: the base
of exploitation
is destroyed.
All have access to the earth without toll or
price.”

That the people say to Ignorance:

“We have changed the system of land tenure, on
which rested your power to enslave.
Every man shall own himself, and by the privilege to withhold land shall
no man have
the power to own another.
The unused earth is free.”

And if Doubt and Envy linger to question:

“Why one man will have better land than another—acres more fertile,
lots nearer market, sites more pleasing for residence?”
A child may answer: “Those who hold the better sites will gladly, freely
equalize the
difference to others—when exploitation’s
necessity no longer stifles the better impulses: ’tis a detail that free men
will
settle in a manly way.”

And the people say:

“But never again shall Greed or Ignorance gain
power to rack-rent, distrain, wage-slave,
pauperize, and disemploy the millions
Thru the primal curse of land monopoly.”

And if Doubt or Doctrine hesitate and ask:

“How then with railroads, carriers, utilities,
banks, trusts, and mines?”
Even the Child may answer: “How about them
now? Free land will not increase their

power,”

And the Student will interpose to say: “Free land will greatly or entirely destroy their power of exploitation. What is left we can then consider.”

That the whole people say to Greed and Ignorance:

“There shall be no mortgage on the bare land, nor any title thereto but use and occupance; land is to live on, cultivate, and develop—not for speculation.

None shall own or hold of earth an inch more than he can use: every idle lot or acre shall be as free as air and sun to him who needs it for a home, a store, a workshop, a garden, or a farm.”

And if the Disputer arise with, “But—If—“

He shall be silenced by a child again:

“These are not issues for slaves to settle. Free men each with a foothold on the soil will settle them in a bold, kind, free way—let us not doubt.”

And the Student will add: “Every social and industrial problem, nay most of the psychologic problems too, that men now rack their ingenuity to solve, will under free land assume entirely different aspects—Free land will change the surface and the heart of civilization.”

That the Human Heart thunder to the world:

“Poverty is dead. Disemployment is ended. The earth is open.

The poor, the weak, the ignorant, the blind shall never be trampled and vampirized again by the withholding of the unused land—For I have bared the bosom of earth to man and in her breasts is sustenance inexhaustible.”

Omitted from the Spoon River Anthology

I was the leading singletaxer in Spoon River
I organized its first singletax club
I once saw Henry George himself
And I knew Louis F. Post
And Daniel Kiefer.
I wrote articles for the press
About taxation problems,
Was a fluent talker
And could prove the falsities of Karl Marx
to anybody
But a socialist.
I was called the John Z. White
Of Spoon River,
We had a flourishing club,
With after dinner lectures and discussions
One a month—regular.
And weekly luncheons at which we discussed
the shipping bill or the currency question
And entertained any noted person
Who came to Spoon River.
Singletax became favorably known
To the Better Elements of Society.
The congregational minister
Preached a sermon on it.
We had a debate at the high school,
“Resolved that singletax is scientific.”

We had an exclusive membership
Of cultured persons
Tirelessly devoted to the cause of
Rational taxation.
If I had lived another year
I would have gone to the legislature
Where I could have scrutinized
Every measure
In its relation to the Philosophy
Of singletax.
But there arose in our midst

A band of irresponsible agitators
Who stirred up the people
To open the land!
They were emotionalists
And would not discuss calmly a compromise
 with those who do not care for the immediate
 Practise of their preaching.
They ranted about the army of unemployed,
About women driven to prostitution,
Men toiling for a pittance,
Children as wage slaves,
Babes starving.
They joined with socialists.
Anarchists, syndicalists, I.W.W's—
People like that!
With anybody who would struggle
To change the land tenure
To use and occupancy
Right away!
I opposed them eloquently
And with stratagem
For their radical demands
Would alienate from our Cause
The growing tolerance of the corporations
 and business men,
The interest of the politicians
And the curiosity of club women.
Bankers, leading citizens, the daily press
Would view us with distrust.
Could anything be worse
For the success of a Forward Movement?
I tried to rally the old war horses
To stand by their colors
And preserve the sacred
And respectable
Singletax philosophy
In unsullied purity
From these anarchists
And disturbers.
But the agitators

Had the voting strength.
So Mrs. Jonesburg and I resigned
And started a Singletax Philomathic Society
For the discussion of proper methods
To alleviate poverty
Three-quarters of an inch a year
Without causing any annoyance
To Existing Conditions.
If I had lived
We might have rehabilitated
Singletax in respectable circles.
But the idea
Of unscientific people
Led by agitators
Demanding the whole earth
Immediately!
Was too great a shock.
They said I died
Of heart failure.
But I don't understand that
For the autopsy surgeons
Couldn't find such an organ
And said it had probably
Been absorbed
In my brain development.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 36.

What's It to You?

What is it to you
That children starve in a land of plenty
That girls are driven to the street for food and
shelter
And idle men tramp unused acres
And broken human lives strew every pathway—
What is it to You?
Not only the rich are guilty
Of the pauperism that degrades humanity
But You, and all, who assent,
Who do less than the most you can do
To stay it. Your hands are red
With the blood of discouraged, starved.
Women, children, and men—your own kin.
The guilt is Yours especially who Knowing
The cause of pauperism
Do less than you might do to stay it.
What is it to you that children starve
Women whore, men steal or beg or tramp
Merely for bread—in a land of Wondrous Plenty—
What is it to You?

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 40.

California

Now

And as it has been for many shameful years.

In a land of wondrous plenty,

Richer than the Indies,

Children hunger—Maids

For bread or ribbons ply the street,

Mothers drudge or steal or starve,

Or whore—yes, for merely food and shelter!

(Who make the thing shall hear the word)

Whores for bread!—thousands, thousands

In a land richer than the Indies!

Why

For lack of Faith and Courage in those who Knew

For that the earth and all

Its natural plenty—its idle, unused chances,

Its mines and wood and streams.

And fairest, waiting acres—all the

Source of every human need or heart's desire—

Its rent and city value—its crops—its wondrous
yield!

All are held by ancient paper titles—

(Dead hands that clutch the living)—held

By a few—from the many—and most held idle,

Held away from idle, needy, Living human
beings!

And Then—

The People of the State of California do enact as follows:

That Every child have play and plenty

Every mother All her needs

Every girl her ribbons and her beau

Every boy—A Chance to Win!

Every man have equal access

To the earth, its acres, mines and trees
Reaping All he sows!
That human faces upward turning
Every soul may grow and dare!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p.
41.

New Bottles

Earth's God

The Living God stands forth in human birth!
In fearlessness no power His Will can girth
 To hasten evolution's toiling way,
Release the millions, paradise the earth!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 44.

Man's God

When sundered chains release the prisoned mind;
When hearts their secret dungeon Prisoner find
 And free!—'Tis He; 'tis only He who can
Raze prison walls and fear-bound man unbind!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 44.

Self Respect

No man is better than I am,
This I affirm, and dare you to prove
That any man
Is better than I am.
No man is worse than I am,
This I admit
And challenge you to show
A baser man than I am.
All crimes I have thought
All virtues I have felt.
I am greedy, voluptuous, deceitful,
I am generous, true, and courageous.
We are different shallowly.
Not better or worse underneath.
We are what circumstance makes us.
None is better than I am, and no one worse.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 45.

The Unknown

Life is greater than philosophy,
Than all the schools
And systems of thought,
Than all the logicians
Dead or living.
I like to think
No child will ever be born
On a day when
All the secrets of nature
Are known
And men can read
All knowledge
In a printed book.
Such a little universe
Would stifle me
Who find the zest
The urge and the joy
Of Life
In the vastness of the Unknown.
Life is vaster than all
The creeds, doctrines, theologies.
Moralities, religions
And philosophies—
Than all the saviors.
Saints, gods, sages,
Wise men and fools,
Dead, living.
Or yet to be born.
Life has had a billion
Times a billion Interpreters
On this little planet alone
And remains—Unknown!
Every sentient creature.
Is an interpreter of Life
And every one interprets
A little differently.
In this lies not despair
Or even sadness.

In this lurks the lure of Life
And the Why thereof.
The deeper, truer, bigger
Joys of Life
Accrue from its
Fearless exploration.

Life would be a prison cell
For the human mind
Shut in by the printed page.
Every soul brings
New problems to Life—
Multiplies its wonderful mysteries.
Life would be a dungeon
To the human soul
Could the printed page
Lessen the vastness
Of the Unknown.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 46.

The Only Revolutionary

Love is the only Revolutionary.
Not a supine submissive love—
A bold audacious Love
That dares anything, everything,
Even the loss of Dollars!!
To gain its darling end.

A Love that lays Profit,
Stocks, bonds and dividends
On the altar of its heart's desire.
Its own stocks, and bonds.
And Profit—
On the altar of Human Welfare!

Such a Love there is in life;
Millions of men feel it,
And daily it shapes
The course of their lives—
Only in little ineffectual ways
Because—

Our aimless, thoughtless
Way of land hogging
Denies Love at the base
And beginning of life.
Bringing to naught.
Turning to ashes

Turning to fear.
To unfaith, cruelty
And self-righteous littleness
All the fruit that ripens
From our fondest, boldest,
Broadest human love.

Where human life begins
We will carry our Love

And end the shameless,
Heartless barter
Of human flesh and soul
For bread or dividends.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 48.

As to Hate

I don't hate the spider that I kill,
But hate the narrow life I lead
In which there isn't room enough
For a spider and myself.
The soldier doesn't hate the foe he slays,
Nor the lion hate the lamb he eats,
I will not hate the men whose
 tenure of earth
Has pauperized the millions—

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 49.

The Nativity

Plead not with heaven's alien Gods to bless
 Some Holy Babe and Mother far away.
 Be thou thyself the God whose power shall stay
With human sympathy and love's access
Whom never Gods bend earthward to caress—
 The Hungry Babes and Mothers of Today!
 Seek thou the Lowly Mothers first, for they
Need most the touch of manhood's tenderness.

Round every Infant brow an aureole gleams
 However starved by Greed's brutality.
The holy Mother in each Mother dreams
 Above the Infant cradled on her knee.
Sing not of ancient Gods and ancient themes—
 All Babes enshrine whatever Gods there be!
Freely adapted from one of Alys Thompson's sonnet
 sequences in *The Year's Rosary*.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 50.

The Only Danger

Fear is the World Lust!

Obsessing human life—
Poisoning its springs of desire,
Glooming its sunlight of love,
Trailing its shadows
Over every natural joy that bursts
The heavy bonds of superstition.
Sans Fear life is worth while.

Fear is the Serpent in the Garden!

Fascinating the soul
To weakness and despair.
Drawing the feet
Always in lessening arcs
To the tomb's embrace.
Death were cheated but for Fear.

Fear is the Mother of Sin!

Dashing to the mud
The soul's reach starward;
Defiling the Garden's
Rose-laden air
With stench of the Puritan.
On the warp of Fear is woven
All that swineherds call sin.

Fear dethrones the true God!

Robs man of faith in—Himself!
Skulking Fear
Of pain, of death, of loss—
Ignoble Fear to stand alone!
Sans Fear of tomorrow
Man will reach his Godhood.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 51.

The Only Virtue

That pluck abide with kindness,
Courage stay with thought,
Daring and decency be friends,
Intelligence evade mushiness.
Sympathy sidestep impotence,
Love remain virile to the end.
That the strength and the hardness of steel
In the hour for action
Come from the deeps of Men
Who can think and feel!
That brutality, sentimentality,
Aimlessness, stupidity, froth.
With cunning, greed and gluttony,
Be not the sole possessors
Of manhood's only virtue—
Courage!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 52.

To Keep the Ideal

Have you a love that you would keep?
Pour it out into a larger love.
Have you a friendship you would hold?
Share it with the world.
Have you an ideal you would not lose?
Lay it on the Altar to Man.
Nothing is an end in itself.
Everything is only a means to something else.
Satiety is the only sin.
Only what is given can be kept.
What is hoarded turns to Ashes.
Nothing is stationary.
Treasure grows or lessens.
This is true of a love, a friendship, or an ideal.
To keep it, share it.
Love is not an end in itself,
But a means of human growth.

Everything is for use.
Nothing is “for keeps,”
Things, qualities, thoughts, feelings—
The world and its contents
Tangible and imponderable—
Are for the growth of Man.
You have heard this before
And gushed over it, no doubt.
Now stop the gush and get it into your system
Live it! Save your love,
Hold your friendship.
Keep your ideal
By use I

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 53.

Antinomies

I will not ask of Life
More than I am
Willing to pay for.
I will not seek
To be drunk and sober
At the same moment—
Drunk of wine, women, thought,
 music, poetry, of the wild
 splendors of nature, or the
 beautiful creations of art.

I will not ask of Life
Joy without effort,
Health without care.
Wealth without work.
The approval of my neighbors
Without consideration
For their welfare.
I will not seek in Life
For the blending of opposites.
Nor an ultimate God.
I will not expect
Gluttony without satiety,
Drink without remorse,
Excess without lassitude.
Anger without regret.
Hate without grief.
I will seek no thornless Rose,
Nor curse heaven
At the scratches.
I will seek the essence
Of the Rose
And avoid its thorns—
When I can.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 54.

A Man's Prayer

distant God
If Thou art in heaven
Or anywhere—
I don't know.
Thou hast not revealed
Thyself to me—
Yet hopefully,
Anxious to miss no point—
O alien God
If Thou art outside of man
Give me power to combat
The bigotry hate envy
Of Thy devotees,
The tortures crimes cruelties
Perpetrated
For Thy glory.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 55.

The Old Art

The old art makes man
The scapegoat
Of creeds, conventions,
 moralities.
Gloats over the soul's efforts
To disentangle itself
From artificial codes.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 56.

The New Art

The new art leaves man
Above moralities,
And seeks its unities
In the human struggle
Out of the web
Of the exploiter's conventions.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 56.

Life Lures

Life lures
To fresh endeavors.
Is it only a lure?
Life beckons
To new adventures.
Must all fail?
Life reveals
Higher aspirations.
Shall none satisfy?

Life shows
Another peak—
Yes, the peaks are endless.

Mountains pile
On mountains—
Still a higher summit.
Life leads
Upward, upward—
If one be unafraid!
Life—halts
The climber and says
Take the crowd along!

What a lonely
Heaven, with
Only one soul in it!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 57.

The Blind Goddess

Symbol of a darker age—
Hewn by men who feared the gods;
Nor sensed the Silver Thread
Nor knew the bond of kinship.

 She holds the scales of Shylock
 To weigh a pound of human flesh.

Symbol of the Jealous God—
Conceived by Envy
That hoards its own and counts
The crumbs eaten by another.
 Scales weigh only gold and goods.
 Scales weigh never motive.

Symbol of the tradesman's age—
When things count more than humans
And children's flesh balances dividends
And property weighs more than life or hope.
 Lust and hate alone are blind.
 Love sees with a million eyes.

Symbol of superstition—
Born in the night of man's great fear.
Sponsored by monk and mercenary,
Dipped in the blood of heretics.
 There is no justice without mercy.
 Care, thought, understanding, and love.

Symbol of materiality—
Chiseled by bound slaves
To weigh surfaces and appearances;
Blind—all blind—to the Inner God.
 Sign of slave and tyrant—
 Give us the emblem of Democracy.

Symbol of submission—
Fashioned by men afraid to love;

Denial of man's divinity. Serving
The ancient Greed and the modern Privilege.
Give us a marble cut by free men.
Give us a symbol with a Soul!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 58.

Humility

Humility is the crowning virtue.
Dare slaves assume it?
The attribute of gods, kings, rulers—even of one
 who might rule self!
On the brow of the mighty having power over all
Humility is the brightest jewel in the last and
 most resplendent sceptre.
Dare slaves reach for it?
Humility—so large a jewel—
Would bow the head of God Almighty
So he could see the chains of slaves
And strike them off.
By this sign ye shall know the True God—
That having all power he ask nothing
And raise all men to his stature!
Humility never graced the life of slave or
 underling:
Servility bows them.
Subaltern and slave whose breasts burnt not
With hot flames of unceasing
Rebellion—
Who patiently wait, submit, and argue
While children toil and women starve
Amid plenty—
Know not humility, but Cowardice!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 60.

Wanted — Men

Wanted—Men!
Able-bodied men,
Bold-hearted men,
To enlist in a holy war
Against poverty.

Wanted—Men!
To fight for
Women and children
As bravely as
For kings and queens.

Wanted—Men!
A million men
To brave death and torture
Gallows and prisons—
To dethrone Privilege.

Wanted—Men!
To dare as much for human
 beings in America
As for property “rights”
In Europe.

Wanted—Men!
To wrest from
Greed and monopoly
The unused land of America—
Men unafraid.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 61.

No Man's Keeper

I am no man's keeper.
No jail keys
Rattle in my head
Or heart.
If I am not
My brother's helper
When I may be
The loss is equally my own.
I will keep no one—
His conscience
His judgment
Or his earnings.
Keepers bring jails
And gallows.
Keepers are tyrants
In hate or in love.
Not your way, but mine
Would I go—kindly.
The soul hungers most
For Self expression.
The urge of life
Is to Individual difference.
Keepers, in love or hate,
Make the discord—
Sad confusion of thought
That harbors the exploiter!
Man is his brother's helper.
Not his keeper.
To help is love's way:
Anon to bind a wound;
Usually not to rob
And never to hinder.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 62.

That I May Strive

That I may die in strife
'Gainst slavery!
Teeth set, hands clenched
To every static bond
In Christendom.
That death find me
Far out from the ranks,
Strike quick
And fell me face forward,
Hating all that limits man.
Life's joy is its strife,
The battle 'gainst odds
Its oil, its wine, and its bread
O! to fall under fire
And escape a smug death in bed!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 63.

A New Valor

A new valor stirs the blood
Of Men.
They shall despoil
The strong, the rich, the mighty,
Whoever hath overmuch
Where many starve.
Boldly, with conscious dignity
Men shall rob the over-rich.

It is taught that
Love shall be slavish
And kindness meek.
On this is founded
The christian cruelties.
But the new valor
Brings power to Love,
And daring to kindness.

The old valor saith
That from those who have not
Shall be taken
And to those who have
Shall be given more.
Thus do the christians
As told in their books—
The creed of cravens.

Thus is it written in ink
By long-dead hands
Palsied with fear,
In tomes rotten
Of the centuries' dust.
The moving Finger writes
In blood
From the heart of Men.

And it says:
Kindness shall be
Bolder than hate!
It stirs a new valor

In men unafraid
Who shall despoil the rich
And unseat Profit
That all may have enough.

The new valor stirs
To action!
The weak, the ignorant
Shall not be robbed
By the cunning.
Kindness shall thunder
To lust: You alone
Shall be robbed.

And the voice will
Be heard!
The lowly and the poor
Shall not be coddled—
Thus do the christians
In charity—
But hear ye the
Thunder of Kindness:
They shall not be robbed!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 64.

Hate Is Force

Hate is a strong force.
I will hate the chains of men—
The institutions, superstitions,
And conditions that bind them.
A good hater is a strong man—
But I will not hate myself,
Which is part of all other selves.
I will hate things, not men.
I will hate gods, creeds, states,
And all that belittles Man.
I will hate words and ideas
That enslave men.
Who hate men have little hate
For the chains that bind them,
And little force or care
To break the chains
At whatever cost.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 66.

Be Strong First

Masters teach their slaves
To “turn the other cheek”
When they are beaten.
But the new valor
Will brook no blow.
Masters teach their slaves
To be long-suffering
Under oppression.
But the new valor
Will slay the oppressor.
Masters teach their slaves
Be good, be moral,
And you shall have
First choice of the crumbs
From our table.
But the new valor says
Be strong, be bold,
And rout your masters—
Only strength is good,
And weakness sin.
Only strength can win.
Be strong first!
Life and the world
And all their good
Are for the strong.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 67.

The New Power

O then to Think
Means not to Feel?
The Head must not
Take counsel of the Heart?
Thus teach the christians.

Thought in one tank,
Feeling in another—
Ce n'est pas comme il faut
To mingle thought and feeling
In a single act.
So do the christians.
But a new light flashes
To pierce the christian gloom—
A wondrous birth—
From the union
Of Head and Heart.

Lo, the Intellect
And the Soul are wed!
Coward Words go tumbling
To the ash heap,
And Deeds accomplish!

The new birth is Sympathy.
Froth of easy sentiment
And cruelty of intellect
It banishes: the child
Of the fusion leads!

The bank wants human feeling.
Religion's lack is thought.
The market-place needs poetry.
Art needs sense and depth and care.
Slavery lurks in aimlessness!

Lo, the Heart and Head
Are wedded!

Come—
To Greed a bolder foe,
To Love a deeper meaning.
To the Many, at last. Power!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 68.

The Love of Gold or the Love of Man

I never knew a man
Who feared not the alien God
Nor loved him, but was the kinder
To his neighbor
And had a fine, firm
Faith in Men.

I never knew a thief
Or forger but feared an alien God
And loved him—
A sneak, a pimp, or
A detective, but confessed
A distant God and feared him.

Maybe
(Tho I have not met one)
An “atheist” could also
Be cold and vicious.
But the million babes in arms
And playful children
Are starved and tortured
In the name of a heavenly
God and Jesus.

In the love of the alien God
Lies the hate of man
And full extenuation
For all the bloody murder
The weeping, christian world
Has ever seen.

The “love of God”
Means the love of Gold
And ever has, by far and large,
And ever must.

The “love of God”
Brings the love of Gold.

For man cannot
Love an Abstraction.

The human heart impinges
Seeks the Tangible.

In God the heart is cheated.
And the cheated heart
Turns to Gold.
I announce a new faith,
A new hope,
A new religion
(Older than the hills)—
The love of Men!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 70.

Hate Gods, Love Men

Ye are taught to love gods—
The creed of slaves.
Ye shall be masters of self
And of none other than self,
When ye shall cease to
Love any god and center
Hope and thought and love
And interest on Man.
Ye are taught to fear gods—
Dogmas of cowardice.
Those who fear neither
God nor Satan
Are your masters and exploiters.
Ye shall fear nothing.
Ye shall cease to fear
And dare all.
Ye shall find Self
Each man himself—
When all gods under all aliases
Shall be dethroned.
Not law, evolution, the state,
Prosperity, posterity,
Progress, or providence—
But Man (each to himself)
Shall be first.

Ye shall hate gods and love Men.
Ye shall love even Self
And seek self-interest first;
Not behind lying cant
As do the christians,
But openly and with
Much pains to discover
The real interests of Self.
Ye shall know Self
The true Self
The whole Self
The body, mind, and soul

Of self—when gods are forgotten
And care and thought
Are centered
On Man!
In the love of gods
Lies the hate of Man,
For none serves two masters.
The hate of Man
Breeds the needless grief
And pain unutterable
Of Christendom—
Hate gods and love Men.
In the fear of gods
Lie sin and weakness.
Here is true valor:
That ye fear not the Unknown.
Fearless of which ye shall be
Strong for the tortures
And prisons of Greed
And attain—Comradeship.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p.
72.

The Master Motive

Superficial appeals to the human crowd
Its pocket-book and its cupidity
Its business interests, personal advantage,
Will bring superficial results
A million of which multiplied by a million
Will not produce a profundity—
Nor a tangible inch of freedom.
Human freedom is the profoundest thing
The heart and mind can reach
Or has any decent right to try to reach
While human lives are wrecked by Greed
Every day and hour before our eyes—
While the mortality and destitution of Profit
Exceeds the death roll of the world war.

When the primal passions
Are stirred the mass will Act,
Unitedly and spontaneously
To compass great and vital issues
For good or for ill
For construction or destruction
For Death or for Life!
So moves the human mass
So is it moved toward the Ideal
By the inextinguishable human Urge
For Something—something Better
Than the personal end—
It knows not what
But is spurred ever by the Ideal.

So is the human mass.
Would you move it
To its own unfoldment—
From the damned death psychology
Of Profits' world war?
Touch its heart.
The greatest, strongest, deepest
Primal instinct of every being
The “master motive of human action”

The “force of forces”
That alone can reach freedom
Is the impulse of expansion—
We call it Love.
Not the servile patient
Slave “love” of christian theology.
By that rules the Exploiter.
The deep unfearing audacious Love
That sees the Goal alone
Leaps the chasm blindly
Fells like fire the Foe.
Nothing less will break the war spell
Or stem the wave of slaughter
For greed of wealth.
Or turn the mass thought
From Death machines
To welfare—
To life and hope and growth.

Nothing less will gain
An inch of human freedom
Or strike the chains from wage slaves
Or turn the children
And the nursing mothers from the alleys
To a free and open earth.
Nothing less!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p.
74.

The State

The strength of the State
Is the weakness of the People—
Its wealth is their poverty
Its dignity is their degradation.
Mighty State—
Little Manhood!
Rome reared its splendor
On sixty million slaves.

The pomp of the State
Is the servility of the People—
Its pride is their shame
Its glitter is their gloom.
The State is a superstition,
Heartless, bloodless, beingless
Save as it draws sustenance
From living creatures.
The palaces of the State
Are the hovels, the slums.
And the mortgaged homes
Of the People.
The richest State
Means the poorest People
And the greatest cruelty
Of the few to the many.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 76.

The Naked Truth

Stark Winter

In the summer
I will sing of flowers
And fling pretty phrases
At the hearts
Of fair women.
I will image palaces of hope
And social structures
Where human beings
Might live and strive
Without hate.
In the summer
When the pulse throbs
Atune with earth's
Creative impulse.
In the winter
As thru a lense I see
Life's barbarities and superstitions
Focalized.

I see broken lives,
Starving children,
Mortgaged homes;
Love lost or defiled
For profit or for bread;
Power's cruelty to the weak.
I long for the summer
Of roses and hope,
But may the winter of reality
Ever stir me to act.
For only action
Brings the Ideal.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 78.

Who Are the Strong?

Is it Great to mulct the little,
Or Fine to cheat the poor?
Do the Strong oppress the lowly,
Wring taxes from the landless?
Does Strength beat cripples,
Or Courage starve women?
Is it Masterful to strike the blind,
Or crush a weakling?
Such is christian valor—
To hang the daring bandit.
Enrich and honor
The craven exploiter!
We cripple the weak,
Trample the meek.
Despoil the ignorant,
Starve the infant at birth.
Even charity is graft.
And we boast
Of Strength and Courage!
Who are the Strong?

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 79.

Be Truthful

Lie to others if you must—

To the jealous wife,

The importune creditor.

It will save you

Much trouble

If you don't.

But—if you must—

Lie to your tradesmen

And your mistress—

Sell goods by lying,

Gain what you will

By falsehood—

So wags the world.

Or appears to.

But—

Tell yourself the truth.

"I am a knave and a liar,"

Say often.

Deceive others if you must,

Tho courage finds it seldom necessary—

But—

"I am a liar and a knave"

Say to yourself

Frequently.

It is better not to lie

Very much. But—

Tell yourself the truth!

No one is wholly

Truthful, in Christendom—

But don't lie to yourself.

"I am a scoundrel"—

Say it often in secret.

You are!
Who is not in Christendom?
Don't He
To yourself.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 80.

Business

I am a business man.
I must cheat, haggle, exploit.
Ninety-five per cent of us fail
Because we cannot kill
All our human qualities
And remain to the end tricksters and brutes.
I am a business man.
In my heart I loathe it.
Deep within me was a hunger
For life and love and friendship
That I have almost strangled.
I am a business man.
Who has Succeeded!
After long years of bitter strife
And preying on the weak
I have won these Ashes.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 81.

Culture

I am tired of art and beauty
And all their tinsel twaddle;
I am tired of logic and philosophy
And all their endless chatter;
I am heart-sick and soul-tired
Of Culture—
While a million children starve!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 82.

Bottom Facts

They seize the earth—
its ore, coal, oil, and
timber, hold the larger
part idle and sell the
product for what they
please: that's the bottom
fact of High Prices.

They seize the earth—
its unused fertile acres,
and hold them out of use,
which crowds the city
with workers who must
bid against each other for
jobs: that's the bottom
fact of Low Wages.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 82.

I Am Free

I am free
To choose, sometimes,
Which master of the earth
I may elect to serve.
I am free
To sell myself, if I can find a buyer,
For enough to feed
And clothe myself.
I am free
To beg, or steal, if I can.
Or starve—
In a land glutted with wealth—
I am free
To pinch and screw and save
And give the best energies of my life
Merely to gain a roof.

I am free
To wander homeless
Over twenty-three hundred million acres mostly
 vacant, unused.
In search of a job.
I am free
To push out a worker
And take a job
From one whose need may be greater than mine.
I am free
To be a prostitute, beggar, thief,
Or to tramp with the unemployed.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 83.

Preparedness

Thieves go well armed.
Assassins, detectives
Manhunters
Must always be prepared
Against invasion—
A troublesome necessity
Of their calling.
Houses that shelter
Stolen goods,
Houses that sell
Woman's bodies.
Homes of the insane,
Jails and penitentiaries
Need guns, bars, and guards
Violence always threatens.
Homes of billionaires
Where are gathered
In monstrous superfluity
Wealth rended from
Countless broken lives
And homeless paupers—
Need a vast army
To protect them.
Banks that hoard
Working capital
From tradesmen
Until their necessities
Wring blood usury
Need more than time locks
And steel vaults
To save them.
Titles to idle acres,
Mortgages on homes,
The penal code,
Privileges and monopolies,
Sweatshops,
Slums
Gallows—

Need much “preparedness.”

The house of exploitation

Is safeguarded

By murder.

Despoliation fattens

On the war psychology.

Chains rattle

Above the roar

Of death machinery.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 84.

Three Blood Brothers

I am Palaver—
Of many aliases:
Security of the State,
National Honor,
Civilization, Humanity—
The spoken or written
Word, to which
The Individual
Is forever sacrificed
By Greed.
I am Cant the hypocrite,
Loved and feared
By ignorance

II

I am Patriotism—
 Provincial and bigoted;
 Hating all but my own,
Ready to persecute
And murder
For a word or a look
Alien to my understanding.
I am the little heart
And the narrow brain.
I am ignorance, creed.
And the church.
I am he who kills
And dies for Greed.

III

I am Profit—
The modern Moloch,
The western Juggernaut,
The only essential
Individualist
The world has ever known.
For me all things exist
And all creatures.

On my altars
Are spread
The life of childhood,
The heart of manhood,
The souls of women.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 86.

We're Going to Hang a Boy in California

We're going to hang a boy—

Twelve men, a regular physician, a schooled
jurist, and a cityfull of righteous people have
condemned—a boy of eighteen.

Whom the wisest of earth, its saviors, prophets,
and sages, have refrained from judging;
whom the Central Figure of the era (in
whose name the nations are filled with
temples) admonished the world to “Judge
Not”—twelve men, a regular physician, a
schooled jurist, and a cityfull of righteous
people have not only judged but condemned
—a boy of eighteen.

We're going to hang a boy—

Not in passion's blinding mists, or youth's high
fever that riots thru distended veins and overthrows the inner God.
Not in lightning spur to lust of blood—the quick
flowering of an atavistic germ from cave and
forest.

Not for a sudden clot that bursts a tiny vein
and floods a lobe and clouds the mental vision.

Not for a flashing impact on a nerve that
reaches from the spleen and dethrones the
clay's master.

We're going to hang a boy—

To uphold the majesty of the law, maintain the
dignity of the State—a boy of eighteen—to
prove that California is an order-loving
commonwealth.

Three million people against a boy of eighteen.

We will hang him to prove our courage, our
virtue, and our civilization.

And the church of Jesus Christ is approvingly
silent.

We're going to hang a boy—

A jury, a doctor, and a “Daniel come to

judgment” have condemned a boy—read his heart, searched his soul, pierced the secret chambers of his mind, laid bare the human ego, and found it all bad!

A jury, a doctor of physics, and a Daniel, have measured the surging impulses of hot youth, balanced the force of impact and impulsion, read the record of the motor brain areas—

And found the boy sane and bad—quite sane and all bad, and have ordered him hanged.

We’re going to hang a boy—

We hope. The sentence may not stand—ah, well, we have had our orgie.

We have gloated at the spectacle in court.

The mother moaned, the sister screamed, the boy was bold—then cowed by the brave and manly judge, he trembled, hid his face in his hands, as the fatal words of the learned judge fell—manly, learned, righteous judge—(I’d rather be a wolf.)

Tho the hangman be cheated, we have had our orgie.

We have heard the mother moan, the sister scream, and seen the boy tremble!

We’re going to hang a boy—

A bad boy. Why is he bad, because he murdered?

Then is he sane because he murdered? Or did he murder because he was sane?

Did the doctor measure the boy’s sanity by his own? Would the doctor do murder? Is it only fear of hanging that keeps the doctor from murdering? Then the boy were a braver soul. If the doctor will consider why he would not murder, he will reach a truer measure of the boy’s sanity.

If the doctor has a better test of sanity than murder is, he is wiser than God.

We’re going to hang a boy—

Unless the supreme court intervenes—or the

governor.
Why are we going to hang the boy? To show
that murder is wrong?—but we are going to
murder him. Murder means killing. We are
going to kill the boy—we hope—
We kill to show that killing is wrong. We are
not only a brave people—three million against
one boy; we are also a sensible, rational, intelligent people.
If it is wrong to kill, why do we kill?
We're going to hang a boy—
Eighteen years from God. Take him back,
God, he's bad, all bad, not fit to live with the
three million inhabitants of California.
Murder is right; we are going to murder a boy.
It's the boy that's bad, not murder.
Why is the boy bad? because he is sane; if he
were not sane he would not be bad and we
would not hang him.
Take him back, God—we reject him; he's all bad
—a bad boy not fit to live with us.
We're going to hang a boy—
Why are we going to hang him; because in a
hot flash he did murder? O, no; we are going
to murder him—in cold blood—deliberately.
Because he is sane? Many are sane and do
murder and are not hanged—those who
murder scores for profit, in a cheaply protected mine drift, or because
life-boats are
expensive.
Because he is bad? Many bad people are not
hanged. Because he is bad, sane, and a
murderer? Many have been all these and
were not hanged.
Why were they not hanged? Because they
were very Wealthy!
We're going to hang a boy—
Because he is poor! His people haven't much
money.

If this bad, sane boy were the child of multimillionaires do you think he would
have been
sentenced to hang?
If you do you are very guileless.
If the boy's father were very rich he could
have engaged the services of a dozen eminent
psychiatrists who would have testified
(truthfully) that the boy was insane.
We are going to hang the boy because he is
Poor!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 88.

Where Are the Women of California

Where are the women of California—
The wise matrons, the honored sisters, the
 virtuous wives, and the enlightened spinsters
Who gained the ballot to uplift society?
Where are the women milder and truer than
 men, of deeper impulse and wider sympathy?
Where are the enfranchised women, while the
 gallows is building
On which to hang a boy?

Where are the women of California—
More humane and benign than men, with tendered sensibilities and nobler
 purpose to
 humanize society, soften its barbarous customs
 and replace its ancient cruelties with decenter
 statutes than those of fang and claw?

Where is the gentler sex with purer love and
 higher instincts to lead mankind from savage
 passions and primitive blood-lust?

Doesn't it hear the dull stroke of the hammer
 in the old lumber room of San Quentin?

Where are the women of California—
With the mother hunger for every mother's son
 in distress and hate for none—
Who value the life of youth more than the
 jungle law of revenge?

Where are the mothers whose ways are kinder
 and wiser than those of the hangman?

Where is the noble motherhood, the gentle
 sisterhood, the precious maternal instinct—
 Where do they hide that they cannot hear the
 building of the gallows on which two sons of
 mothers are to be hanged?
 One of twenty-three and one of eighteen?
 Where are the million mothers of California?

Where are the women of California—
Who will not hypocritically hide their lust of
 revenge

By fatuously asking, What else can we do with
a boy who kills another?
Where are the women whose love for the unslain, and care for those who
have not killed,
is stronger than their hate of a mentally
weak boy?
Where are the wise women of impersonal view
who will discourage murder by suppressing
the state's example of murder?
Where are the women who loathe murder more
than the blind victims thereof?

Where are the women of California—
Whose finer feminine intuitions have raised
them above the brute instincts of men?
Where are the women who will bring moral
vigor to civilization and lure us away from the
fear and hate of cave days—
The women less crude and cruel than the
shrinking low-browed males of California
who have no shame to hang a boy?
Where are the women, better than men, to save
a boy from the gallows?

Where are the women of California—
Whose sympathies are wider than their skirts—
Their mentalities stronger than their love of
tango?
Where are the women, the voting women, with
mind and heart reaching beyond the boundary
each of her own little nest?
A hundred real women could wipe the stigma of
the public hangman off the seal of the state.
Where are the women of California!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 92.

Two in a Million

Braver than soldiers stalking to kill—
Than heroes their own lives who take or give.
True as who live when death were easier.
Rash as those splendid gamblers
Throwing dice with the unknown
For gain of knowledge.
Bold as seekers for the Pole
Or the Congo's source—as those
Who dare the skyey whirlpools.
These play for gain that is dross
To the mother's gain
Who pleads for the life of the boy
That slew her own.
These play for honors, excitement,
For gold, or for peace;
But what the widow's gain
Pleading for the life that
Killed her children's father?
What have they braved?
The jeers of a hate-ridden world,
Contempt of the shallow and emotional
Alien to deep sympathy—
The sneers of the modern jungle
Whose denizens still proudly share
The passions and impulses
Of the wasp and the wolf.
What have they dared?
To do what the pious preach
And never practise; to be
What sages admonish all to be
And few are; not to seek revenge.
They have honored their dear dead
By love complete
That leaves no room for hate.
What is their courage?
To brave the contumely of lawyers
And judges—
The scorn of the self-righteous,

The abuse of that poverty-fear
Whose craven imbecility
Keeps the hangman's law
On the statutes of California.

They have braved public opprobrium
And the ridicule of the smug.
From a thousand pulpits
They will be rated "sentimental."
They have braved
The orthodox church
And the harlot press.
Their gain—if but the hope of gain
Can spur the heart and head
To act in concert—
Their gain?
Who understand alone may know.
What light is to darkness,
And love is to hate,
Such is their gain.

Daughters of the Newer Eve!
Yours the light what time
Earth's gloom shall cleave?
Temptresses with riper fruit!
Yours the lure of men bold-hearted
In the long pursuit.
Fair! ah, sisters fair!
'T is men, not brutes,
Your "sacrosanct cajoleries" ensnare.
Nor man nor Superman
Might live to grieve
His "soul's enmeshment in your hair."

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p.
94.

Only the Poor

Only the poor we hang—
Never the rich!
Not all the poor we hang—
But none of the rich!
Not for murder we hang—
And only the poor!
Many slay and are free,
But not the poor!
To kill for profit,
Betray and debauch.
Are common things—
For the rich!
The hangman guards
The loot of Privilege!
We hang only the poor—
Never the rich!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 97.

We Love Murder

We love murder—
And hate the man.
We gloat on the crime
And loathe the man.
Our venom
We exhaust on the man—
And wallow exultant
In the shocking crime.
Our jaded appetites
Morbidly revel in the details
Of the murder—
And shrink from the man.
By press, code, gallows
We foster crime—
And hate men.
We love murder.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 98.

If He Were Yours

Judge, if he were your boy,
Would you hang him?
“The law” is two words—nothing more.
Those two words—of hate and revenge—
Are impotent without your interpretation.
You speak the word of death!
Governor, if he were your boy
You would not sign that death warrant.
If he were the son of your old friend,
The son of your political manager.
The son of the woman you loved—
You would not sign the death warrant.
Warden, if he were your son.
Would you hang him?
No; it is not “the law” that hangs him.
Only human beings can build a gallows,
March a boy or a man on it.
And spring the trap that hurls him Out.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 99.

If We Hated Murder

If we hated murder—
We would cease to encourage it;
Cease to feed it on Poverty, Hate, Fear;
Cease to breed it by gruesome spectacles
And inculcate it
By the subtle force of suggestion.
If we intelligently discouraged murder—
Judges, detectives, sheriffs, keepers, lawyers
Would lose their jobs, dignities, salaries.
In every population are many.
Whose incomes depending on crime,
Are not interested to lessen murder.
If we hated murder—
And thought hanging would lessen it
We would hang even the rich. Once
We hanged a man who had \$75,000—
But not until the last penny of it
Was gone for legal fees and expenses!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 100.

Your Brother

If he were your brother
You'd go far
And do much
To cheat the gallows!
If he were your brother,
Your neighbor, you kin.
Or your friend—
Would you cry "Hang him"?
If he were your brother,
Your son, your father.
Your husband, or lover.
You would plead for his life!
If he were your brother,
You would raise heaven
And earth to save him
From the gallows!
He is
Your brother!!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 101.

I Will Not Fight

I will not fight
To save for Wall street
The exclusive privilege
Of exploiting, degrading
The people of America—
For a flag, for markets, for words
Like patriotism, prosperity, or
To keep the Japanese or any other people out.
There's room enough for the whole world of men.
I will not fight
To perpetuate slavery—
But with a mighty battle
To open the land of America
To the dispossessed millions
Count me in to the end.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 102.

War Lines

Armageddon

This is no Armageddon.
This is a squabble of thieves.
The murderous hosts of Europe
Have nothing to gain or lose.
Esdraelon's plain will redden
When the masters meet the slaves.
This is no Armageddon.
That will be Death against Life
That will be Manhood's struggle
To end the robber strife.
This is a tradesman's war
Powder and guns and provisions
Watch how the prices soar.
This is not Armageddon.
This is the broker's gamble
With interest at 80 per cent.
A money lord's scramble.
Hear the cash register jingle
At every soul's descent
And the pulse of the market tingle—
This is Greed's game with Death.
This is a newspaper war—
Its pawns driven to slaughter
And lured by the daily press.
No one hates the German,
No one hates the French,
No one hates the English,
Only the daily press.
This is no Armageddon
This is the christians' bluff
All the captain's praying
That Greed may keep its clutch
And stay the Armageddon
Delay the real war
Of Man against Money.
This is no Armageddon

This is no test of strength
This is the feeding of flesh
To death machines
That rip and tear and mangle
“The human form divine”
“Made in God’s image.”

This is for broken treaties
That will avenge broken lives.
Wait till the hosts of Darkness
Face the powers of Light
Then the world-struggle!
And may Death alone win
If Right fail for Might!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 104.

War's Masks

War masks itself in glittering pomp and tinsel,
With blare of brass and pageantry of trampling
troops

Cheered by aimless women who love gold braid
And smirk on empty-pated automatons
That strut like dunghill roosters and swell
With mindless vanity vacuously to obey.
War's mask is this, but at its heart lies
Cold, mechanical, calculating Profit.

War lures with murder, blood, and pillage,
With rape and loot and all that stirs the passing
Human brute to primitive ferocity;
Envisages with lust of gluttony
To lure the jungle avatars of men.
War's lure is this, but at its heart lies gold
For bankers, bonds for financiers, and profit
For crafty brokers of war munitions.

War hypnotizes by sorceries of words
And fatuous phrases. Nor Patriotism, the flag,
My Country, Prosperity, Progress, nor a thousand
Like noises would Profit budge an inch
To serve—because Profit knows them for what
They are, but empty sound to awe the mass
To insane murder for Profit's profit. War
Enchants the weak with mercantile palaver.

War masks in red hot courage, in glorious
Death for fatherland and home—lies infernal!
(Devised of church and press and school
To pay their keep by wealth) that snare the weak
And ignorant to hack and kill each other
And stand as targets for machine guns
While Profit reaps fresh harvests
And validates again its titles to land.

War's public attitude is Balance of Power,
Trade Supremacy, Markets of the World,
National Integrity; its pith and purpose is

To refasten the chains of industrial
Slavery on toiling millions, to exploit
Little tradesmen and petty merchants
And hoard still vaster piles of wealth
In never loosening grip of Greed.
To break the wave of social discontent
War masks in frothy horror and black fear;
Dangles huge cruelties and crimson
Carnivals of pain to fascinate the
Sensual emotionalists and snare souls weak
Of human courage aborn of thought
And sympathy, sans manly daring
To fight for Man instead of kings and profit.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 106.

War Will Not Cease

Let warriors be reassured
Their occupation is lasting—
But men will not always
Kill each other.
There will be no peace
Till the last lie
Of religion and philosophy
Has been uncovered.
Let the fighters cease twaddle
Of the enervation of peace.
Greed will remain a worthy foe
For many centuries.
There will be no peace
Till man is free
Of all the superstitions
Of church and state.
Let the heroes be content.
There are monsters and dragons
Of unknown spheres to slay—
When man has ceased to kill himself.
There will be no peace
For courageous men
Till the last veil is torn
From the visage of Reality.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 108.

The Real War

That ye strive for the real
As ye battle for the false.
That ye bleed for freedom
As ye fight for chains.
That ye dare for Man
As ye die for God.
That ye slay your foe
As ye kill your kin.
That men who think and feel
Be as bold as the shallow.
That sympathy and thought
Rob us not of manhood.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 109.

The New War

The new war will be
For men instead of markets,
For life instead of profit,
For love instead of hate—
To dethrone rulers and gain
The earth and its fruit
For the Many!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 109.

A Flaggeral

The fondest flag is only a rag—
 But a man is a soul!
 Tho it be of silk
 It is poverty's ilk
 That pays its toll—
 Men hack and kill
 At Capital's will
Death take and give
 So a few can live
 On the blood and dure
 Of the poor.
 It's a rich man's flag
 And only a rag—
But a human life is a soul!
The silkiest flag is only a rag—
 But a man can feel!
 The scrawniest cat
 Or the skulkiest rat
 Can breathe and suffer,
But a flag is tougher
 Than the heart of Greed
Making war for profit!
They wave the flag, a gaudy rag—
 They raise a shout
 And the dupes march out
 To murder each other
 At \$13 a month!
 The proudest flag
Is a senseless rag—
But a man knows joy and pain!
A rag can't feel,
 But its wavers steal
The land of the "foreign foe,"
 While the men who fight,
 Give Greed its might,
Get what for their pain and woe?
 Disemployed at home
 Blanket-stiffs they roam—

Driven off the naked earth as bums
 In the name of a flag
 That's only a rag.
 But is fondled more
Than human babes in the slums!
 Who honor the flag
 As a sacred rag
Dishonor woman and man?
 Their guns to sell
 Turn earth to hell
On human life they prey!
 And the red bar's stain
Is the human flood
The heart's own blood—
 The brand of Cain!
O, a child's lost joy
Or a broken toy.
 Of sanctity has more
 Than profit's flag of war!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 110.

All This Killing

Cowardice lurks in killing
Weakness dogs
Fear skulks
Behind it.
Logically it is futile
To kill—boyish, brutish
Not manly.
It may be unavoidable
To kill—
A mad dog or a mad king
Or a mad financier
Or a mad policeman—
But weakness and fear
Lurk in killing.
It is hideous to kill
And unnecessary.
Nor health nor strength
Nor beauty can ensue.
Weakness and fear
Are the net
Products of killing.

There are other ways
To be passionate
And courageous,
To risk life and feel
The shock and thrill
Or high daring
Than by killing people.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 112.

The Lesser Evil

War to abolish Poverty
Is better than peace
That maintains Privilege.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 113.

Peace and War

Profit takes heavier toll
Of human life
In peace than in war—
Will drain the heart's blood
Of more men, women, children
Starve their bodies and minds,
Vampirize their souls—
Ruthlessly and needlessly slay,
In America,
To fatten dividends
Of railroad, factory, and mine,
More, far more than will die
On the European battlefields!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 113.

Its Shame

This war 's a wanton hussies' bawdy game.
Usury's murderous lust of gain—its aim
 No higher than a harlot's lust of gaud.
Each power aloof—oblivious to shame!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 114.

Its Strut

War's fatuous strut—its hate and rage so crass,
Gold braid, emotion, pompous death en masse—
 Is all a wolfish, strident, shrewish game,
The soldier but an automatic ass.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 114.

The Lie

The Moving Finger writes with crimson stain
Its record red of every human gain
 In Christendom—the theologic lie!—
That growth can only come thru pain.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 114.

Slay Your Masters

Ye are taught to hate,
Ye are drilled to kill—
One Another!
Ye are bidden:
Servants obey your masters.
But the nucleus stirs in the life cell,
The prisoned plant bursts granite
To reach the light,
The hidden God that man is
Awakes!

Above the rattle of falling chains
Hear ye the voice of Manhood—
Servants arise,
And slay your masters!
Hear ye the boldness, the trueness,
the faith
And the thunders
Of awakened Men:
“Kill only the foeman!
Kill boldly, O yeomen.
All who would exploit,
Would rob, or deny—
Would palaver and cheat
By law and deceit
Any child of its food,
Any soul, any man or his mate
Of whatever is earned
In the sweat of the brow!”

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 115.

The Eucharist

Again the christians gather for the Host,
The millions slay to please their Holy Ghost
 And make of Eucharist a real feast
For God who smiles when murder riots most.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 116.

If We Must

Since murderous war, invoked by tradesmen's
greed.

To battle hells the landless millions speed;

 If war must be the common lot—O men
Awake! and battle for the common need!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 116.

New and Old Songs

Song of the Printing Press

I am the Printing Press—Anarch of Christendom,
Breeder of discontent, fomenter of strife, destroyer
of hopes and delusions:

I am the thunder and the flash bursting palls
of sacred superstition—

The earthquake sundering anointed forms,
The wind that topples reverent customs,
The flood that drowns creeds and churches—

I am the sunlight in Which men rear new temples,
Gain new illusions, fresh hopes, larger ideals.

I am the Printing Press—Dooming authority.

Unseating gods and kings, plotting revolutions,
stirring to rebellion, revealing to slaves the
chains that bind them:

I am the danger of a little knowledge that
precedes more knowledge and ripens to
wisdom:

I am the pain and the ecstasy of quickened
growth, the bitterness of knowing, the pang of
disillusion, the dregs at the bottom of the cup:

I am that which is clothing right with might.

I am the Printing Press—Time's analyst,

Sifting, dissecting, assorting, evading or hiding
nothing;

Searching the dark corners, dragging into sunlight the dust of centuries,
the slime of lust,

the mold of weakness, the debris of ignorance;

Lending myself to all shams, shames and villainies, to all graces and
divinities:

Culture and crudeness I blazon, faith and doubt
unmask, hate and love mingle, pride and
humility, prejudice and sympathy uncover—
I reveal man to himself.

I am the Printing Press—The silver thread

That binds the human whole:

I am that Messiah foretold by the prophets.

Buddha and Jesus were my heralds:
I am the resurrection and the life, the cross
and the circle, regeneration and destruction;
I am the trinity of pain, knowledge and growth;
I am the power to roll the stone from the tomb
of death and reveal life:
I shall uncover the secret place of the Grail
and cleanse all men
To drink from the golden chalice.
I am the Printing Press—The means and the end
Of external progression—the journey out and
the return.
I shall marry the heart to the head of man—
wed intellect and sympathy, care and art,
purpose and genius, passion and reason,
religion and logic, poetry and usefulness,
morality and nature:
I am wearing away the crudities and intensifying the realities—transmuting the
primitive
instincts to finer perceptions:
I am fitting man for his new environment:
I am the prophet of that time when the written
word shall be obsolete—
When men shall speak soul to soul.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p.
118.

A Plea for Man

I plead for Man—

Against the Written Word:
The state and the statute,
Preamble and resolution,
Theology and philosophy,
The fixed belief and the static thought—
Reason's fumbling clutch, logic's icy touch;
Against the sorcery of syllables and
The hypnotism of hyperbole.
Against all the tomb's tentacles
I plead for living men.

I plead for Man—

Against the guns and creeds of Greed
And the black blindness
Of orthodox and infidel
To the law as unbroken as gravity
That the only gain
From the commerce of death machines
Is hate and pain.

Against the world's darkest hour
Of the tradesman's triumph
I plead for human beings.

I plead for Man—

Against hell's heresy
That growth and joy and wisdom
Must come thru suffering,
That good lies in the bitterness of strife
And grief is integral in life;
That sweets grow in sour and purity in filth
Or anything of worth accrue to one
By forcing misery on another.
Against the exploiter's creeds of Death and
Destruction

I plead for human life.

I plead for Man—

Against God
And all his plutocrats and prophets
And their religions to bind vassals,

Their morals to promote mediocrity,
Their dogma of Rights
To maintain “mine and thine”
Against the human need
And the heart’s demand.
Against the glory of God and the gluttony of
Greed
I plead for Man!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 120.

Song of the Railway Crossing

Hear the bells at the railway crossing.
Ding dong, they sound,
If the wind is right,
Above the roar of the hastening train
Of electric cars
Whirling a hundred passengers
From the city to their homes.

It's a dangerous crossing.
The smooth auto road
Bisects it diagonally.
Therefore the warning bells—
Ding dong, they sound,
When the wind is right.

A dozen people a year
Were killed here.
That's why the bells were installed—
Cunning electric automatic bells.
Now the death record
Is reduced to six.
Hear the bells
At the dangerous crossing.
Ding dong, they sound.
Sometimes,
Loud and clear above the wind
And the rushing trains.

Glorious bells!
Six lives a year
They save—
And six are killed.
Four interurban electric tracks
Cross the county road here.
The trolley cars pound along
At thirty miles an hour,
The autos glide at twenty-five.

Last night in the wind and rain
There was crash!

Only one was killed
And one crippled.

Whose life went out?
Not yours or mine,
Anyone we know?
A. B. Smith.
Never heard of him.
Read the next item.

What are the bells saying?
Ding dong, they talk.
This is their song:
“Cheap skates are we.
We cost a hundred dollars
And save the railroad
And the county the expense
Of obviating a dangerous grade crossing.”
“Cheap bells are we,
As cheap as human life.
We save dividends for the company
And every taxpayer
Fifty cents.”
Ding dong, ring the bells
At the dangerous crossing.
One was killed
And one crippled
Last night.
Not you or me—
Only some stranger.
Taxes are high
And life is cheap.
Ding dong, ring the bells.
Dividends are more than life
And taxes than a cripple!
When the life
Or the limb
Is not
Yours or mine.
All the dividends of the world

Were not worth my life,
Or yours.
But the other fellow's—
Ding dong, ring the cheap bells.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p.
122.

That Love Be Bold

That Love should be as bold as Hate—
 Audacious, fearless
 For light and joy and freedom,
 As Hate is for darkness and pain;
That Love should dare to seize and hold its own.
For what is all the world's attainment
 If pain with growth and knowledge
 Keep the pace?
 While crime and hunger stalk
 What profit all the piety and grace?
That Kindness be as strong as Cruelty—
 To mold the world
 And have its heart's desire;
 To kill the thought or thing—
 Remove whatever bar its way!
For what are all the dreams and ideals
 If love be meek?
 If kindness, thought, and care
 Gain only—patience!
 The dream is but a snare if Love be weak.
That Sympathy should outrun Prejudice
 And have its way on earth!
 Nor wait the toilsome centuries'
 Blind and groping growth.
 That Sympathy be quick, courageous, true!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 125.

A Man Belief

I believe in Man—
In men, women, and children;
In their welfare,
Their freedom from exploitation,
Their opportunity to grow—
Every human being's chance
Freely to develop
His own Individuality
Without hindrance
From Greed.
I believe in Man—
In living, breathing human beings
The “least” or the “worst”
Of which
Is more precious
Than all the minted gold.
Than any state or government.
Or any institution or church
Or property
The sun ever shone on.
I believe in Man—
Every man and every woman
And every child,
The raggedest of whom
Is more to be considered
Than all the railroads
And corporations
And temples and mansions
And riches
In the whole wide world!
I believe in Man—
Whose Present Hour
And chance to live a full life
Now and Here
Is more than all the Gods
And theologies—

More than all the dreams
Of superman
Than all the means and methods
Of Utopia I

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 126.

Song of the Hangman

I am the hangman—
Paid to strangle boys, men, women—
Whoever is caught in the snarled meshes
Of the Big Net
Threaded of the vengeful penal code.
Woven by detectives, judges, and lawyers
On the warp of Poverty.

I am the hangman—
Hired by the Ladies and Gentlemen
Of wealth, piety, position, and culture
To suffocate their brothers and sisters—
Because ten thousand years ago
Marauding herders imposed “the law”
On conquered peasants.

I am the hangman—
Who throttles the victims of the Net
In an obscure corner of a
Gloomy room in the state prison
Where the moans and curses
Will be hushed
From the delicate ears
Of wives and mothers.

But they hear and feel me!
Ill-fed mothers embrace me;
Their unborn babes are mine
When chance calls;
In the womb I brand them.
Vain is your hiding of me—
All the fearsome and weak are mine.
Whose passions outrun their mentalities,
Whose spleens are more developed
Than their brains!

For I am the lethal god—
Whose face is hidden in
Clouds of red passion. I am
The god of the abnormal.

I obsess the weak of will
And possess the perverted.
Into every open ear I whisper
“Murder!” I am
 The color red that turns to black—
 And while I live
 No soul evades me!

I am the public hangman—
Focus of the world’s cruelty,
Cumulous of its hate,
Sum-total of its fear and ignorance.
My days and ways and dreams
Are of blood.
I am he who kills, kills, kills—
For a monthly wage
Paid by the State.

I am the hangman—
Mercenary descendant.
Of old Judge Lynch,
Whose ways were quick, crude, merciful—
And I, more often than he did.
Hang the wrong man.
My ways are refined. I am
Cold and mechanical—the paid ghoul
With critical eye for the long tortures
Of those who wait in the Death Cell.
I am the State’s hangman—
The conscience of every voter.

 His malice and savagery.
 And I am bolder than he, for
 I do what he dare not.
 My blood lust is his—
 My courage is my own.
I am the hangman—
 The State’s hired butcher of men.
 I am the avatar
 From dungeons of the Inquisition,
 And ye are the mob that gloated.
 Long live the lust of blood!

When my trade is gone
Men will cease to kill each other.
I am the hangman—
Who does the work the judge
Orders but has not the “sand”
To perform.
I am the sign of the incapacity
Of modern people to treat
The crime of murder intelligently.
I am the ignorance and stupidity
Of the Christian mob.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 128.

The Doctrine of Rights

The Doctrine of Rights—
Dogma of intolerable wrongs—
Wrongs to little children, to nursing mothers,
to youth of immaturity, to helpless age—
The food stolen from their mouths
And heaped in gluttonous piles around a few
greed-blinded inhuman beings—
Billionaires who riot in luxury while millions
drudge and pinch and go without—
Wrongs that Men, real men, courageous men
with the natural dignity of a Hottentot, the
human sympathy of an Apache, the nascent
manhood of a wolf or porcupine would never
tolerate—

Babes starving by the thousand
Children's lives ground out in mine and mill
Women on the street corners offering their bodies
for bread—
And we haggle over Rights!

Under the dogma of Rights—
The greatest wrongs the world has ever known!
No one has a Right to anything
While a child lacks food.
It is avarice and envy
That demand their Rights,
The brave take and leave.

The Doctrine of Rights is a quibble—
A dogma of caste
Artificially dividing
An invertebrate people
Who argue and pass resolutions
While their weaker ones starve
And broken human lives
Litter every pathway—
In a land of Plenty, in a land of Plenty, in a land
of Plenty!
In a land where all the necessities and luxuries

of life

Are so abundant they choke the warehouses
And the surplus is destroyed.

The state's Rights
The church's Rights
The landlord's Rights
The army's Rights
The prison keepers' Rights
The hangman's Rights
The millionaire's Rights
The exploiters' Rights
The bankers' Rights
The money lenders' Rights
The brokers' Rights
The merchants' Rights
The employers' Rights
The brothel keepers' Rights
The prostitutes' Rights
The wage earners' Rights
The people's Rights
The paupers' Rights—
Inalienable Rights!

Up and down the christian earth men—
Are we Men?—
Prescribing, discovering, balancing, maintaining,
defining, defending, enacting
Our Rights!
Bench and bar ransack tombs and tomes
For definitions and precedents
To establish Rights!
While a million shop girls sell their bodies for
ribbons and bread—

(Ribbons count more
Than bread
With the woman
I would love)—
And bread and ribbons so plenty
That the markets are gluttoned—

While men—
Men?
Haggle over their Rights!

Prisons, gallows, penal codes, death machines—
Ten hundred thousand
Toiling, slaving, sweating
Night and day—dying!—
In the munition hells
To make fiendish contrivances by which living
 beings are mutilated and murdered—
To establish and maintain Rights!
Whose Rights?—
Of the cunning, the stronger, the cruel, the
 heartless;
To rob, cheat, kill, debauch, and exploit
The weaker and the trusting.
All up and down
The christianized parts of earth
Spies and detectives
Are peeping thru keyholes
Of cabinets and bedchambers
To uphold Rights!
And children are dying in the streets
And men are entombed in mines
Youth poisoned and life blackened
In sweatshops—
While we haggle over Rights!
The Doctrine of Rights
Is hell's dogma of servant and master.
Manhood will cast it out
And put decency, courage, kindness—Love!
A bold defiant daring love
In its place.
O have done with the quibbling!

The world needs Men—
The starving children need Men
To feed them
Now!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p.
131.

Personal Privilege

I will love all men
I will hate no man
But I will toady
To no man's
Superstitions—

To no man's concept
Of an alien God
Outside, over, beyond
Himself
And myself—
Of a God
Who does not speak
In every human voice
And look thru
Every human eye.
I will honor all men
I will judge no man
But I will not
Keep silence
At the things men do.
I will oppose
I will denounce
The deceptions
And the cruelties
Of any man.
I will love all men
But not their crimes.
I will accept all men
Without question
But not their delusions.
Some men do this
Some that.
Whether this or that
I am little interested
Unless it hinders me
Or others.
Another's motive

I cannot penetrate.
My own are mixed
And obscured
By innumerable things
That urge and limit.
I will accuse no soul
But I will appraise
All conduct that trenches
On the welfare of another.
I will separate
The doer from the deed.
I am anxious to please
My friends.
I am solicitous
For the goodwill
Of those who love Men—
But I will not
Bow to their idols.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 136.

Personal Privilege

A Friend of Mine

w. r. a.

He sells goods,
Is a merchant of wares—
Yet I love him.
He sells things that people need,
Yet I respect him!
He doesn't paint pictures
Or write poems
Or deal in "culture"
While children starve
And girls go to the streets.
He only sells goods
That people need
And sells 'em honestly
And has never yet
Sold himself.

What artist, lawyer
Poet, writer
Can say as much for himself
Truthfully—that he has
Never sold himself for Gain?
That he has never
Lowered his ideal
For dollars?
A few—possibly—possibly!
Be truthful to yourself.

He sells goods—
But not himself.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 138.

Divergence

Does life
Present itself to you
As a personal equation—
A matter of getting
Some personal material
Advantage

Regardless
Of broken lives
And starving children?
Then I am not
With you. Our
Paths widely diverge.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 139.

Fay

Can a picture
Be better than it looks?
Yes, if a human portrait.
There's Fay—
As bad as any of us
And as good—
But looking.
Staid, dignified, prominent!

No one could be
So eminently
Distinguished and correct
As he—looks—
Fay—
With the heart of an anarchist
The soul of an I.W.W.
The brand of the outlaw
Christ!
A traitor to his
Smug and respectable
Appearance.

Why!
He gives comfort and cash
To law breakers.
Associates with agitators—
He, who looks
Like a Pillar of Society
Friendly with
Convicted felons—
And with some of us
Not convicted—yet.
Even with the disturbers
Of Existing Conditions
The eminently
Respectable
Dignified—Fay—
A traitor to his Class A.
He is fey

To the world of things
As they are
And Fay
To us who know him.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p.
140.

Why I Stay

There's a soft green island
In the South Sea
And a dark-eyed woman
Who beckons to me.
Yet I stay.

There's a hungry child
In California
An infant soul
Whose body
Lacks food and shelter.

There's a starving maid
In California,
A girl whose hunger
For bread or ribbons
Is denied.

There's an exploited mother
In California
Whose choice is
Between the sweat shop,
Starvation or harlotry.

There's a jobless man
In California
Tramping over Idle Acres
Moving on—begging—stealing—
The sheriff's irons behind him.

There's a broken life
In California
A discouraged hopeless being
A blood brother of mine—
And a fighting chance
To succor him—
A bare chance
Immediately
To Open the Earth
And free him.
Not one only
Tho one were enough

For a man—
But a hundred thousand—
So I stay and strive in California.
There's a green isle near Fiji
In the tropical sea
And a dark-eyed woman
Beckons to me,
Yet I stay in California.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 142.

Now

This is the age of romance
Not yesterday
Nor tomorrow.
This is the day
For great daring
And wonderful deeds.
This is the hour
To slay the dragon
Of Greed.
This is the time
Of high emprise
We are the world's heroes.
This is the age of romance
When Manhood shall
Assault Omnipotence!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 144.

At the Rosslyn Hotel

One arose and said
He had sacrificed more
For Single Tax than I had.
He was right.
I haven't sacrificed anything
For Single Tax.
The vision of Henry George
Owes me nothing.
I am its debtor
For the greatest hours of my life.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 145.

Facets of Truth

The Silver Thread

There are in every society a number of people who care. For these life is not bounded by their material satisfactions. They are not content to mind their own business and let the world wag along as it will. For it doesn't wag that way. It has no will. It wags as Rockefeller and the steel trust will. And that spells a shameful and unnecessary poverty—hunger, prostitution, starvation wages, child slavery, insanity, suicide, murder for profit, and millions unemployed. Reason enough why those who care should not be content to sit with hands folded in their own houses. Consciously or unconsciously these sense the invisible silver thread that runs from heart to heart and binds the human mass into a unity from which no unit can escape. This silver thread is not known or sensed by those whose attention is fixed on externalities, and they marvel when “unmerited” blows fall; nevertheless it is the most real thing in the world, and whoever does not reckon with it will find his steering wrong. The silver thread by which the tortures of a Danbury hatter touch the life of a Pasadena millionaire is not mere trope of speech or poetic metaphor. It is more real and lasting and unescapable than rent, interest, and land values. But only those who care sense it.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 148.

Human Nature Percentages

Gather a thousand human beings anywhere.

 Show them the possibility of realizing immediately a sane, decent, kindly
 system of social
 life

Eighty per cent will enlist to accomplish it.

Gather a thousand human beings anywhere.

Show them a strange new fiscal device for the
 alleviation of poverty an inch a year.

Ten per cent will eagerly embrace it and try
 to force it on the rest.

Gather a thousand human beings anywhere.

 Show them an Ideal that calls for heroism—
 and a Self Interest easily reached.

 Ninety per cent of them will choose the ideal.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p.
149.

Still Waiting for Heaven

Beware the medieval concept of Heaven! It lingers in the consciousness of those who think themselves most liberal, most radical, unorthodox, infidel. Many who fancy themselves free bold atheists still believe in Heaven. They have disowned the word, denied the material mansions in the skies, repudiated an afterdeath state of perfect bliss—still they are thrall to the essentiality of the material concept of Heaven, which denies the reality of Here and Now and relegates everything to the future. Heaven is a habit of thought, a habit of dwelling only or mainly in the future. It is the idea that happiness can only be attained after awhile, that the ideal is only possible for the future; that here and now we must suffer in this vale of tears, but after awhile we will reach socialism, or anarchism, or singletax—then our children or their children will inhabit a decent world and begin truly to develop. It admirably pleases the needs of our masters and exploiters, who are no longer alarmed that we repudiate the word “heaven.” They grant us that “freedom,” seeing that the Heaven habit of thought abides with us and we go on as ever planning and educating always, always for the future—never for Now!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 150.

Human Nature

Human nature is full of meanness and pettiness —on its surface. The tongue lies, our interests lead us to deceit, fear keeps us chained to the superficial, the strife against poverty engenders hate and envy—the shadow or the reality of need or hunger saps our frankness and courage, reduces us all to the status of sneak thieves and detectives. This is the surface of life. Underneath it lies the heart, dormant usually, or pumping only in a mechanical way. Rouse it, interest it, excite it to consciousness and dominance, and you will find beneath every hypocrite, liar, and coward (which we all are)— A Man or a Woman true and dependable at the center. Human nature is cramped, distorted, perverted —first and chiefly by the economic and industrial infamies—but its Heart is true.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 151.

The Source of Power

The seat of power is the Heart. The head invokes it, the hands execute it—but power resides in the Heart, Mentality guides, shapes, molds it (more or less)—but the source of power is the heart. This is not gush or sentimentality, but physiologic fact. The heart supplies all motor power—automatically as a rule, unconsciously, aimlessly. The brain analyzes, relates, ponders, plans— but without the Heart it has not power to stir a leaf. In all life the Heart is the reservoir of power, and whoever would accomplish anything must invoke it. We quicken the nerve ganglia of the spleen, the liver, the solar plexus, and other centers— and get emotions of hate, envy, deceit, sensuality, as these centers draw undue blood from the Heart. But quicken the Heart of man, reach directly the Source of Power, and a great expansion of force flows (we call it love or sympathy) that dominates, dares, and performs!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 152.

Personal Salvation

Personal Salvation is the great delusion. The world is not built that way. Individualism is only intellectual and at no time is it more than half the truth. The other half is, that the deeper part of every human is indissolubly attached to the human mass and responsive to every throb of pain or joy that thrills the mass. No one can fall off the earth or rise above it. While the mass is enslaved no one is free. While the mass is degraded no one can be much else.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 153.

Ideals

The only man who lives up to his ideals is the man who has none. Ideals are of thought which is fluidic, and wherever thought is active, ideals keep a measurable pace in advance of conduct. When conduct catches up with ideals, thought has ceased to flow, “mental stability” ensues, self-complacency and self-righteousness obtain.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 153.

Martyrdom and Sacrifice

Self-sacrifice and martyrdom are childish concepts—when not worse. Men seek ever their own good—what is most congenial to themselves, to whatever element of self is then uppermost. Martyrdom and self-sacrifice are—cant. No one sacrifices himself—he “sacrifices” one part of himself to another part. He relinquishes, rejects, that which he conceives to be the lesser in order to obtain what appears to him to be the greater—having learned that he cannot have both. Our acts are for self, for the gain of self, be the gain of gold, pride, love personal or impersonal. Forever we search for the more desirable—to Us—for the thrills, surges, feelings, exaltations (or degradations) peculiar to ourselves. How blindly we grope!—for the excitations of alcohol, the soothings of peace, or the ecstasies of the heretic burned at the stake! I want that, and only that, which it will give me the greatest satisfaction to obtain. What is gain for one man appears as dross to another. Fear, prejudice, habit, keep many from finding their best gain. Ignorance keeps all from their best. But that which each seeks is ever the best that each knows and feels at the time. Some find their best in seizing, robbing, exploiting—or in ease and yielding. Some find theirs in giving and in doing. But each seeks always his own best, and martyrdom and self-sacrifice are—cant.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 154.

Oodles of Knowledge

If socialism, anarchism, or singletax means a kinder and decenter world— We are ready for it Now! All our economic education pertains only to life in the christian jungle—and doesn't ease it or help it. If singletax, socialism, or anarchism means to perpetuate this jungle existence, then they are all negligible. If they mean the end of robbery and exploitation, if any one of them will shear the state of its power to bestow privileges that despoil— Then we are ready for it Now, without another moment's education or preparation. All that lacks is the Power. "Knowledge is power"—not at all. Intellect is only the perceiver of things, the knower, the director. Power is one thing, quite another is knowledge. Already we have knowledge—mountains of it, books, tomes, libraries of ancient and modern knowledge. Life is cluttered with knowledge—the heart is cloyed with it—we have shrivelled to pusillanimity beneath the heavy load of our knowledge—most of which is self-contradictory and all of it negligible while a million human beings are jobless! Knowledge has robbed us of Power.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 155.

The Line of Cleavage

Those who Care and those who don't—this is the line of cleavage in human society. It does not run between exploiter and exploited, the robber and the robbed: those are later accidents of environment and opportunity and circumstances. The still earlier “accident”—so it must appear to our comprehension—that we have to deal with is the “accident” of birth which gave this man a quickened heart and this man a dull one—this man a heart responsive and this man a heart obtuse. Some men Care and some men don't—this is the line of cleavage. It does not parallel any of the artificial lines that superficially separate society into classes. It is not between the masses and the classes, not between labor and capital nor between worker and parasite; it is not between proletariat, bourgeois, and tinsel aristocrat, nor between the educated and the ignorant. The true line of cleavage runs perpendicular thru all the classes—even thru radicalism itself— and divides the world into those who Care and those who don't.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 156.

Not the Worst Thing

War is not the worst thing in the world. It is not so evil and hideous a thing as the gallows or the electric chair. The war passion is fine—that men will leave all that is dear to them to go off and face death for an ideal, however mistaken. Slavish peace is worse than war, and infinitely worse are the degradation's of unemployment. War at worst is ignorance—that men should make an ideal of their slaveries. The sorrow of the war is, not the spirit of idealism that drives the millions to it, but that the millions should mistake their chains for “something better” and make an ideal of their slaveries. The shame of the war is—the Profit wrung from it.

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 157.

The Heart Leads

The heart leads, not the head. Reason is to sift truth from its clinging fancies and crass material concepts, mind is to detect error, to correlate and to explain, but the finding of truth and peace or whatever is of real worth is the function of the heart. It leads! And it leads not to despair, not to distrust of Infinity or carping at its seeming cruelties, but to a wider sphere of consciousness with profounder depths of feeling and loftier intellectual reaches, where the antinomies and perplexities of external life are softened gradually till they disappear—where the sharp blacks and whites merge into grayness and the garish midday colors are lost in azure mists thru which rise those “half-glimpsed battlements of eternity”— “Not where the wheeling systems darken, And our benumbed conceiving soars! The drift of pinions, would we hearken. Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.”

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 158.

The World Is Awake

The world is awake as never before.
Its heart is aflame with daring.
Mankind is ready for wonderful changes.
It is the time for the fruition of dreams!
Huge things are going on—
Robberies and exploitations that stagger the
 imagination,
A world holocaust of senseless murder,
Half of human energy making death machines,
Privilege reaping monstrous streams of wealth
That flow from the life blood of countless
 children, women, and men—
Human life crushed into Profit!
The world is awake—Only for blood, lust, and
 death?
Wait! You will see. Great things are coming—
 Quickly!
The heart of the world is aflame.
It is the hour for the fruition of dreams!

Publication. First published in *Songs of the Great Adventure*. Los Angeles: Golden Press, 1917, p. 159.

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Colophon

Publication and production notes

This critical reading edition was edited by Brian Kim Stefans for The Text-Tech Papers, Los Angeles, in 2026, as part of *Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry*. The poems were reset from the source pages identified in the publication notes and datasheet. The book was composed in EB Garamond on a cream field at 6 × 9 inches. The cover uses original abstract artwork prepared for this edition.